

Around the Community



Assemblyman Braunstein marched in the annual Little Neck-Douglaston and Whitestone Memorial Day Parades.



Assemblyman Braunstein congratulated the winners of his annual Mother's Day Essay & Poetry Contest: (l-r) Maximus Rodriguez, Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Academy (OLSCA) in Floral Park; Kyle Cyril Moreno, OLSCA in Floral Park; Nailah Dunning, P.S. 159 in Bayside; Emma Rampersaud, P.S. 115 in Floral Park.



Assemblyman Braunstein allocated \$300,000 in state funds for Glen Oaks-Bayside Emergency Medical Services to acquire a brand-new emergency vehicle, which will provide critical care and transportation services in eastern Queens.



Assemblyman Braunstein celebrated America's 250th Anniversary at Francis Lewis High School with Senator John Liu and over 1,000 members of the community.

Assemblyman Edward C. Braunstein

DISTRICT OFFICE: 213-33 39th Avenue, Suite 238 • Bayside, NY 11361 • 718-357-3588 • Fax: 718-357-5947
ALBANY OFFICE: Room 422 Legislative Office Building • Albany, NY 12248 • 518-455-5425 • Fax: 518-455-4648
EMAIL: braunsteine@nyassembly.gov
Follow Assemblyman Braunstein on Twitter 

Improving Affordability: 2026-27 Budget Highlights

This spring, Assemblyman Edward Braunstein and the New York State Legislature passed the State Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget. Assemblyman Braunstein fought for the inclusion of several items to help combat the rising cost of living.



“Lower car insurance premiums, utility rebate checks and expanded eligibility for senior rental and property tax exemptions – as prices keep rising we are taking action to reduce costs and make life more affordable for New Yorkers,” said Assemblyman Braunstein.

Tackling High Utility Bills

The State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2026-2027 Enacted Budget includes funding to provide relief to families struggling with rising utility rates through Protecting Our Wallets Energy Rebate (POWER) Checks.

The POWER Checks are slated to be sent out from September to December of this year. The checks will be available to eligible full-time residents of New York and are based on 2024 tax returns as follows:

- Joint filers with incomes below \$150,000 will receive a check for \$200;
- Joint filers with incomes between \$150,000 and \$300,000 will receive a check for \$150; and
- Single filers with incomes below \$150,000 will receive a check for \$100.

Additionally, the budget explicitly requires gas and utility companies to return excess revenues back to consumers and establishes the Residential Affordability Through Energy Savings (RATES) Commission to examine the causes of rising energy costs and recommend long-term solutions to protect consumers and lower utility rates.

Lowering Car Insurance Premiums

The Enacted Budget included reforms to bring down costs of auto insurance rates and tackle fraudulent claims across New York State. Specifically, the budget:

- Requires insurers to return excess profits to policyholders through credits,
- Helps eliminate bias and discrimination in how insurance rates are determined for motorists by prohibiting insurers from using occupation, education level, homeownership status or zip code as the sole factor in determining auto insurance premiums or rating tiers, and

- Seeks to crack down on fraud by adding the staging of a motor vehicle crash to the definition of insurance fraud under penal law, among other measures.

Expanding Tax Exemption Eligibility for Senior and Disabled Renters and Property Owners

The new state budget expands income eligibility for the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) and Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) programs from \$50,000 to \$75,000 and authorizes New York City to raise the eligibility for the Senior Citizen Homeowners' Exemption and Disabled Homeowners' Exemption from \$50,000 to \$75,000. This will help more New Yorkers afford their rent and property taxes, enabling them to stay in their homes.

Assemblyman Braunstein Provides Benefits Assistance for Seniors

Assemblyman Braunstein, in partnership with Services Now for Adult Persons, Inc. (SNAP), is offering benefits and entitlements counseling to individuals 60 years of age and older. This includes help with EPIC, Food Stamps, HEAP, Medicaid, Medicare Part D, SCHE and SCRIE. Please call Assemblyman Braunstein's office if you would like to schedule an appointment with a SNAP caseworker.



Assemblyman Braunstein and students from Cardozo High School delivered hundreds of items generously donated by Northeast Queens schools and families through the “Valentines for Vets” gift drive to hospitalized and disabled veterans at the St. Albans VA Community Living Center and the New York State Veterans’ Home at St. Albans.

Co-op Win: Assemblyman Braunstein Helps Secure Expansion of J-51 Program

Assemblyman Braunstein joined local co-op leaders, shareholders, and elected officials in Douglaston to announce and celebrate the renewal and expansion of the highly successful J-51 program: a longstanding New York City tax incentive that helps offset the costs of capital improvements, such as heating system replacements, plumbing and electrical upgrades, and energy efficiency measures, in eligible rent-regulated rental buildings, cooperatives and condominiums.

The State Legislature renewed and expanded New York City's J-51 program as part of the Enacted NYS Budget. The program was renewed for ten years, and the average assessed value eligibility threshold was raised from \$45,000 to \$60,000. The eligibility threshold will increase annually based on changes to the consumer price index. The new version of the program also allows co-ops to use the abatement to cover the J-51 application fees.

These positive changes will ensure that more middle-class co-ops, such as Beech Hills (pictured above), can apply for this vital tax relief to support capital repairs. An estimated 1,500 co-op and condo properties citywide are newly eligible.



"I have been a longtime supporter of the J-51 program, which offers residential buildings essential tax relief to support capital repairs," said Assemblyman Braunstein. "Co-ops are a cornerstone of middle-class housing in Queens, and by renewing and expanding the J-51 program, we are helping to preserve affordable homeownership in New York City. This is a major victory for our middle-class co-ops, and I thank Governor Hochul, Senator Toby Ann Stavisky, and all of the co-op and condo advocates who partnered with me to make it possible."



Assemblyman Braunstein marched in the 8th Annual Bayside Saint Patrick's Day Parade.



Assemblyman Braunstein joined the effort to build a brand-new Museum of Korean American Heritage in Flushing, Queens, advocating for \$4 million in state funds to break ground on the new facility.



Assemblyman Braunstein invited Cardozo High School basketball coach Ron Naclerio to the NYS Capitol and introduced a Resolution commemorating his most recent achievement: his 973rd career win, making him the all-time winningest basketball coach in NYS history.



Dear Neighbor:

I hope you are enjoying a pleasant summer. This newsletter highlights the actions I have been taking in our district and in Albany on behalf of our community. If you would like to sign up for my email list to receive more frequent updates, please email me at braunsteine@nyassembly.gov. As always, my office is available to assist you. If you are having trouble with state or local government issues, please do not hesitate to contact us. My staff and I are always here to help you obtain benefits, provide information on government programs and develop legislative solutions to community problems. I thank you for the privilege of serving as your Assemblyman and I wish you and your family a healthy and happy rest of the year.

Edward C. Braunstein
Member of Assembly, 26th District



New York State Assembly • Albany, New York 12248



Assemblyman **Edward C. Braunstein** *Reports to the People*

Summer 2026

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Assemblyman Braunstein attended the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Shrine Church's Annual Festival with family and friends.



Assemblyman Braunstein marched in the Queens India Day Parade in Floral Park, celebrating India's 80th Independence Day.