



Assemblyman

# Andrew Hevesi

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Assemblyman Hevesi briefs the Queens Delegation on Home Stability Support

## Assemblyman Hevesi Introduces Home Stability Support as Solution to New York's Homeless Crisis

As we face the worst homeless crisis since the Great Depression, Assemblyman Hevesi has worked in his capacity as Chair of the Assembly's Standing Committee on Social Services to stem the tide of homelessness in New York State. Last year, New York State reported to the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development that 19,000 more people became homeless than stopped being homeless. This growing trend cannot be allowed to continue. In order to enable vulnerable populations to stay in their homes, Assemblyman Hevesi has created and proposed the Home Stability Support (HSS) plan. HSS will be a new rental supplement which will cover 85 percent of a recipient's fair market rent, as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's fair market rent standard. HSS will be funded by New York State. Those eligible for the program will include families and individuals currently on public assistance, at imminent risk of eviction, currently homeless, or facing loss of housing due to domestic violence or hazardous living conditions. HSS will stop the increasing trend of homelessness and reduce the multi-billion dollar financial burden placed on taxpayers to pay for shelters, emergency rooms, housing courts, and law enforcement. New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer analyzed HSS and released a study indicating that this program will save New York City taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

HSS has received bipartisan support from elected officials both locally and throughout the state. Supporters of HSS include over 113 of Assemblyman Hevesi's colleagues in the New York State Assembly, 30 NYC Councilmembers – including our local Councilwoman Karen Koslowitz and Councilman Barry Grodenchik. In Queens, Congressman Joseph Crowley, Congresswoman Grace Meng, and Queens Borough President Melinda Katz support the program. NYC Public Advocate Letitia James, NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer, Mayor Bill de Blasio, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, and Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams have also endorsed HSS. Throughout the State, several County Executives and Mayors have signed on, in addition to a variety of local community and civic groups. In our neighborhoods, Queens Community Board 5, Queens Community Board 6, the Juniper Park Civic Association, and the Brooklyn/Queens Archdiocese are also in support.

HSS is the only viable solution to address our homeless crisis in a socially and fiscally responsible manner. Assemblyman Hevesi will continue to work alongside his colleagues throughout the state to have the program implemented. Together, we will help tens of thousands of the most vulnerable New Yorkers and save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.



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# Governor Cuomo Signs Assemblyman Hevesi's Legislation to Combat Human Trafficking

As Chair of the New York State Assembly's Social Services Committee, Assemblyman Hevesi has been working on the issue of human trafficking in our State. Assemblyman Hevesi authored Assembly Bill 9317B, which was recently signed into law in November 2016. This law expands the New York State Interagency Task Force on Human Trafficking, adding seven new members to the board, and requiring the Chairman of the Task Force to create subcommittees which will report annually to the legislature with recommendations on how to prosecute purveyors of human trafficking.

In addition to this legislation, the Assemblyman has also been actively working to assist victims. It is estimated that between 14,500 and 17,500 people are trafficked every year in

the United States. Victims of these crimes often face multiple issues on the path to self-sufficiency, including Post Traumatic Stress, housing problems, drug use, and sometimes immigration problems. Recognizing the scope of the problems that trafficking victims in New York encounter, Assemblyman Hevesi has recently been appointed to the New York State Interagency Task Force on Human Trafficking, conducted a hearing focused on trafficking in June 2017, and partnered with trained specialists, including Judge Toko Serita of the Queens County Criminal Trafficking Court, the Coalition for the Homeless, Safe Horizon, and Sanctuary for Families and others, to draft multiple pieces of legislation to address the scourge of trafficking in New York State.



Assemblyman Hevesi conducts a public hearing on services for victims of human trafficking

## Assemblyman Hevesi funds 'Center for Healing' for Sexually Exploited Youth

After consultation with the Jewish Childcare Association (JCCA), Assemblyman Hevesi provided \$400,000 in funding to open the "Center for Healing" in Westchester, NY. The Center, run by Director Jessie Boye-Doe, provides evidence-based, clinical services to JCCA-referred children and families who have suffered child sexual abuse and/or exploitation. The Center for Healing, which helps hundreds of children, provides trauma-focused, therapeutic services combined with psychodynamic and cognitive behavioral therapies to help children and families develop appropriate coping skills while processing past child sexual abuse trauma. The Center also provides appropriate training and support to JCCA staff to address the needs of this population, and works to educate everyone who works on the Center's campus.

Each participating family has access to individual and family psychotherapy sessions as well as comprehensive bio psychosocial, psychopharmacological, educational and medical evaluations, as needed. The Center also utilizes the Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children (TSCC) and the UCLA Trauma Inventory for children and families, as well as psychological testing and substance abuse assessments by licensed substance abuse specialists.

Further, the Center works to help promote a general understanding of the needs of these youths through partnerships with entities such as the 9th Judicial District, and other groups that come in contact with these sexually exploited children. Assemblyman Hevesi, along with service providers like JCCA, will continue to lead the fight to protect these vulnerable children throughout the State.



Assemblyman Hevesi, Foster Care advocates, and Senator Tony Avella attend a press conference announcing the passage of KinGAP legislation



Assemblyman Hevesi stands with the Supportive Housing Network of New York in the fight to secure additional supportive housing units in New York

## Gov. Cuomo Signs KinGAP Legislation Introduced by Assemblyman Hevesi to Help Children and Youth in Foster Care Achieve Permanency

On October 24, 2017, Governor Cuomo signed into law a piece of legislation (S4833-A/A7554-A) introduced by NYS Senator Tony Avella (S.D. 11) and Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi (A.D. 28) to amend the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP) to expand the definition of “relative guardian” to include adults with close relationships to the foster child.

The legislation was first introduced in the NYS Legislature in March 2017 and received overwhelming support through memorandums of support from Lawyers for Children, Citizens Committee for Children (CCC), the New York City Bar, the New York State Bar Association, New York State Kinship Navigator, the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (SCAA), the New York City A.S.F.A. Coalition, and the Committee on Children and the Law. Additionally, The Office of Court Administration (OCA), the Children’s Aid Society, JCCA, Sheltering Arms, the Legal Aid Society, Council of Family and Child Care Agencies (COFCCA) and Lawyers for Children, were also instrumental for their guidance while crafting this legislation. As the 2017 Legislative Session came to an end in June, the bill unanimously passed both the Senate and Assembly.

KinGAP was designed for a foster child to achieve a permanent placement with a relative who had been the child’s foster parent for at least six months. This program provides financial support, and potentially medical coverage for the child once the child is discharged from foster care. The level of financial support to the Kinship guardian is also similar to the maintenance payments received while the child was in foster care.

This legislation rectifies a flaw in the current law that only allowed KinGAP assistance beyond the age of 18 if the Guardianship Assistance Agreement did not commence before the child’s 16th birthday. Meaning, a child 14, 15, or younger, who may want to go to college or a vocational program while living in the guardian’s home, would be blocked from a permanency option that may be the best, and often only, option available. These children are faced with the choice to either delay permanency until they reach the age of 16, thereby costing the State and County more in foster care assistance, or sacrifice kinship guardianship permanency altogether.

New York States Social Services law now has an expanded definition of ‘prospective relative guardian,’ including adults with close relationships to the child, who are not related by blood, marriage, or adoption. This new definition will allow hundreds of children to leave the foster care system and live in permanent homes, exponentially increasing their chances for success and self-sufficiency while being taken care of by an individual they know and trust. This expanded list of individuals, if deemed appropriate by a judge, will be eligible to become kinship guardians.

This program demonstrates significant value, not only for the children and families affected by the program, but also for the State in their goal to find permanency for each child in foster care. Assemblyman Hevesi will continue to work with his colleagues in the State Legislature and non-profit sector to craft legislation to protect and help children in the foster care system.

# Assemblyman Hevesi Hosts Local Electronic-Recycling Drive and Pro-Bono Law Days

Assemblyman Hevesi partnered with the Lower East Side Ecology Center to host a free electronic recycling drive in our district. This Center works to properly dispose of unwanted electronics such as televisions, printers, and computers, in an environmentally safe manner. Our community brought in over 5,000 pounds of unwanted electronics to be recycled. The event was cosponsored by Councilwoman Karen Koslowitz (C.D. 29) and Queens Borough President Melinda Katz.

Additionally, Assemblyman Hevesi held a series of “Pro-Bono Law Days” in partnership with the New York Legal

Assistance Group (NYLAG). NYLAG provides free civil legal services to New Yorkers who cannot afford a private attorney. The event brought attorneys directly to our district to meet one-on-one with constituents seeking legal advice, offering them expertise in everything from general legal questions to insights on specific cases. These inquiries included landlord tenant issues, quality of life complaints, property concerns, and noise complaints.

Assemblyman Hevesi will continue to bring these necessary services to our district to directly help those in our community.

New York State Assembly • Albany, New York 12248



Assemblyman  
**Andrew Hevesi**  
*Reports to the People*

**Winter 2018**

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## Assemblyman Hevesi Spearheads Effort to Build More Supportive Housing

During the 2016 legislative session, Assemblyman Hevesi led the effort to fund thousands of new supportive housing units in New York State. As a result, in the 2016-2017 State budget, \$1 billion was allocated to build 6,000 new units of supportive housing. Supportive housing units are designed to assist chronically homeless individuals, affording them wrap-around services including mental health, drug, alcohol, and counseling services.

The populations that benefit from these services include veterans, victims of domestic violence, the elderly, the infirmed, and the mentally ill. Assemblyman Hevesi’s efforts in New York City and Albany generated commitments from Mayor de Blasio to invest \$2.6 billion to create 15,000 units and Governor Cuomo to fund the creation of 20,000 additional supportive housing units. This \$1 billion was the first round of that funding.