



Assemblymember Robert Carroll

Legislative Session in Review



Summer 2020

District Office: 416 7th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215 • 718-788-7221 • carrollr@nyassembly.gov
Albany Office: Room 557 LOB, Albany, NY 12248 • 518-455-5377 • <http://nyassembly.gov/mem/Robert-C-Carroll/>

LEGISLATIVE SESSION IN REVIEW

I hope this newsletter finds you well during these challenging times. Since COVID-19 hit New York in March, the legislative session was thrown into a tailspin and much of my legislative agenda, like our State, was put on pause. The focus of the legislature shifted almost entirely to passing legislation to help those most impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Then on May 25th, when George Floyd was murdered by police in Minneapolis, which led to mass protests nationwide, the

legislature took up a package of police reform legislation that was long overdue.

All the while, my office has been assisting hundreds of constituents to navigate the unemployment claims process, providing PPE to our non-profits and local businesses, assisting emergency food providers, and drafting and advocating for my own legislation to make life better for New Yorkers.

Support for Working Families

The economic devastation caused by COVID-19 requires New York to take bold action to help renters, homeowners and small businesses. New York is facing a \$13 billion budget deficit for FY 2021 and a projected \$61 billion deficit over the next four years. The Governor has long resisted closing this budget deficit by raising taxes on the ultra-wealthy. I disagree and support increasing taxes on individuals who make more than \$10 million per year, on luxury second homes valued at \$5 million or more and on Wall Street. The legislature should enact these tax increases to stop devastating cuts to essential services like our schools, hospitals and the MTA. The State should also use this revenue to give rent, mortgage, and property tax relief to individuals and small businesses financially impacted by COVID-19.



Assemblymember Carroll with a young volunteer painting the Black Lives Matter Mural on Joralemon Street in front of Brooklyn Borough Hall.



Assemblymember Carroll with Mohammad Razvi from Council of People's Organization and Ray, a Teamsters Local 202 member delivering fresh produce for COPO's weekly food pantry on Coney Island Avenue.

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Mass Transit

The MTA is facing a \$10.3 billion deficit through 2021 due to losses in tax revenue, fares and tolls brought on by COVID-19. If we want New York to recover economically from COVID-19 then we need to ensure the MTA has the necessary funding to provide 24/7 bus and subway service and keep the system in good repair. That is why I have introduced A.10445 which would require the MTA to provide twenty-four hour service after the COVID-19 state of emergency has been lifted. Furthermore, I have organized members of the State Legislature to lobby our federal representatives for relief and have proposed additional legislation to raise revenue for our mass transit. After the 2008 financial crash two subway lines and multiple bus lines were eliminated. We must not let that happen again.

Schools

In early August, the NYC Department of Education released their plan for reopening schools. Safety should be our top priority when reopening schools but novel ideas like outdoor classrooms or using high school and middle school buildings as additional space for in-person elementary school instruction should be fully explored.

I have been in contact with parents, teachers and the DOE about the above ideas and others, to provide more in-person instruction for K-5 students while following all safety protocols. A maximum of 8 days, per-month, of in-person instruction for young students is not enough. Kindergarten through fifth grade students are most in need of supervision and in-person instruction to master foundational skills. Our teachers and administrators have done amazing things with distance learning but it is a poor substitute for in-person instruction. As we continue to advocate for more in-person instruction for students in lower grades, the DOE must continue to improve distance learning for upper grade students, and any teacher, administrator or student who has or lives with someone with an underlying health issue. I will continue to work with all stakeholders and push the Mayor and DOE to produce a more creative and better school plan.

Police Reform Legislative Package:

For too long our City and State has over policed and criminalized black and brown New Yorkers. After the murder of George Floyd and the protests that followed, more Americans than ever have been awakened to the racial disparities in our policing and criminal justice system. I have long believed that much of what we use police and the criminal justice system for could be better accomplished through community-based social programs and a deemphasis on incarceration as a solution to our societal issues. In June the legislature passed a package of criminal justice and police reform bills. I was proud to co-sponsor all ten of the bills we passed.

Here are a few highlights of the bills that I feel are most impactful:

- **Repeal of 50a:** A.10611 will allow the public to gain access to records of police misconduct.
- **Banning Chokeholds:** A.6144-B creates a new crime of aggravated strangulation, a class C violent felony, when a law enforcement officer uses a chokehold or similar restraint against a person, causing serious physical injury or death.



- **Special Prosecutor:** A.1601C establishes an Office of Special Investigation within the Office of Attorney General. The bill authorizes the Special Prosecutor's office to investigate and prosecute incidents involving the death of a person caused by the act or omission of a police officer or certain peace officers and provide that the Special Prosecutor would replace the District Attorney and would be empowered to obtain an indictment against the officer when warranted, and bring the criminal case to trial.
- **STAT Act:** A.10609 requires courts to maintain and report records concerning arrests and court proceedings involving low-level offenses such as violations and traffic offenses.
- **Body Cameras for State Police:** A.8674-A provides body-worn cameras to all state police officers while on patrol, provides when a body camera must be used and the exceptions to their use, the preservation of body-worn camera footage, and the maintenance of the body camera. The Attorney General may investigate any instance where body cameras fail to record.

I am proud of all the legislation that we passed and look forward to working with colleagues to make further policing and criminal justice reforms in the coming months and years. This must include ending mass incarceration, solitary confinement and providing a fair and timely parole to all those incarcerated, especially our elders.

Additionally, I introduced legislation, A.10632, which would prohibit prior police officers whose position was terminated or vacated due to misconduct from again becoming a police officer.

I have also introduced A.8613, which would allow the opportunity for parole to any incarcerated person who has served at least 25 years in prison, no matter the sentence.

Reforming our criminal justice system is of the utmost importance and I encourage all of you to continue your advocacy. Only with your collective help will we move forward and make our society a more humane and just place.



Business Interruption Insurance Legislation

The loss of life due to COVID-19 has impacted all of us in New York. Many have lost family and friends and all of us know someone who has passed away from this terrible virus. As we grapple with the health implications of COVID-19 and determine better ways to protect our most vulnerable, especially low income and communities of color, we must also fight to save our small businesses and cultural institutions from financial ruin.

At the beginning of the pandemic, when restaurants and other non-essential businesses were closed, a number of small business owners reached out to tell me that even though they had been paying business interruption insurance premiums for years, their insurance companies were universally denying their claims. In denying small business claims, insurance companies cited a vaguely written clause, inserted into a policy hundreds of pages

long, that exempted “viruses” from coverage. This is wrong and even more disgusting when you discover that insurance companies currently have more than \$1 trillion of reserves. Reserves that insurance companies created from the premiums that were paid by policy holders.

In late March, I introduced A.10226, which would eliminate the virus exclusion loophole and allow for business owners to rightfully collect on their claims. While my legislation has 45 co-sponsors and has been covered in the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, The City, Crain’s New York Business, CNBC and elsewhere, the legislation wasn’t taken up in committee. This lack of action is leading to the economic ruin of thousands of small businesses across New York. I will continue to advocate for this bill and others like it, in hopes we can save the small businesses that make New York a unique and great place to live.

Small Business Loan Program from Hebrew Free Loan Society

Councilmember Brad Lander and I have joined together to announce that the Hebrew Free Loan Society and The Change Reaction are offering 0%-interest loans to small business owners and independent contractors affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, including businesses located in the 44th Assembly District.

The Greg Perlman and Michael Clark Small Business Angel Fund offers two types of interest-free loans to Brooklyn businesses:

- **0% interest loans** up to \$25,000 for small businesses
- **Loans of \$3,000-\$7,500** for independent contractors and small business owners who have been required to close or cease operating due to the state’s PAUSE order

If you are a small business or independent contractor in either CM Lander or my district and have experienced financial hardship attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic you will be eligible to apply for the loans. Loans will be repayable in equal installments over the course of 24 to 36 months, after a grace period of three months. Businesses must have normal revenues of \$1M or less and 15 or fewer employees to qualify. For both types of loans, no guarantors or collateral are required. Individuals seeking loans must fill out an application that includes authorization to obtain a credit report. On time rent for the twelve months up to and including March 2020 is a requisite of eligibility. Applicants will be contacted within two business days of applying, and decisions on most loans will be made within five business days. If you have questions or would like to apply, please reach out to my office at (718) 788-7221 or email carrollr@nyassembly.gov



Assemblymember Carroll and Councilmember Lander distributing Personal Protective Equipment to local businesses in Park Slope.



Assemblymember Carroll with Naji Almontaser at the Yemeni American Merchants Association's weekly food pantry.

**INTEREST-FREE
LOANS
FOR BROOKLYN SMALL
BUSINESSES**

A partnership among the offices of Councilmember Brad Lander, Assemblymember Robert Carroll, the Hebrew Free Loan Society, and The Change Reaction.

Details and Apply:
bit.ly/BKsmallbizloan

Logos for Hebrew Free Loan Society, Brad Lander, and The Change Reaction.

Thank You Frontline Workers

I want to personally thank all the frontline workers, the nurses, doctors, transit workers, first responders, grocery and restaurant workers, delivery personnel, hardware stores, and every other essential worker that has helped get us through this time. I also want to mention a few constituents and leaders of non-profits and community groups who have really gone above and beyond to be there for our neighbors throughout this pandemic.

Sue Donoghue, Prospect Park Alliance

Martin Maher, Brooklyn Borough
Commissioner, NYC Parks Department

Richard Moylan, Green-Wood
Cemetery

Mohammad Razvi, Council of
People's Organization

Nowshin Ali, People In Need

Kashif Hussain, Pakistani American
Youth Society

Rabbi Avi Greenstein, Boro Park
Jewish Community Council

Jelani Mashariki, Black Veterans
for Social Justice

Judy Willig, Park Slope Center
for Successful Aging

Lenore Friedman, Senior League
of Flatbush

JoAnne Biswakarma, Dorchester
Senior Center

Prospect Hill Senior Center

Shahana Hanif and KWT Mutual Aid

Anthony Finkel

Alec Duffy, JACK Brooklyn

Andrew Rigie, NYC Hospitality Alliance

Bazah Roohi, American Council
of Minority Woman

Danny Kane, President of
Teamsters Local 202

Stephen Katzman Produce

Hebrew Free Loan Society and
The Change Reaction

Dr. Anne Fine, NYC Department
of Health and Mental Hygiene

Tracey Agerton, RN, MPH,
NYC Department of Health and
Mental Hygiene

Waqil Ahmed, Pakistani American
Youth Organization

Meals for Brooklyn Healthcare
Heroes Organizers

Naji and Dr. Debbie Almontaser
and YAMA

Muslims Giving Back

Rev. Daniel Meeter

DRUM: Desis Rising Up & Moving

Robin Redmond, Flatbush
Development Corporation

HM Shajedul Islam Oriki

Brooklyn Braised, Meals on Us
Initiative

Joanne Oplustil, CAMBA

Volunteers at Pop Up Food Pantry at
Camp Friendship

New York Presbyterian -
Brooklyn Methodist Hospital

Maimonides Medical Center

My Legislative Aides, Mary Kay Seery
and Victoria Guisinger, who did
exemplary work assisting constituents
in need, especially on matters related
to applying for unemployment
insurance.

And everyone else out there who has
done your part and then some during
this crisis. Thank You.

New York State Assembly, Albany, New York 12248



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Remembering Joe Ferris



The former Assemblymember Joe Ferris.

In June, former Assemblymember Joe Ferris, who was my predecessor Jim Brennan's predecessor, passed away. He was 85. Assemblymember Ferris was elected to the Assembly in 1974 and served for 10 years until Jim was elected in 1984. Joe Ferris was a fierce advocate for independence and reform in Brooklyn and New York City and did so much for Brooklyn and the constituents he served. Prior to being elected to the Assembly, Joe served in the United States Army, taught in New York City schools for 15 years and at Rikers Island. On a personal level, Joe was a true friend to my family and a mentor to my father, Jack Carroll. He was an individual of unshakeable integrity and since I was elected in 2016, I have always done my best to live up to his example of independence and honesty. I offer my deepest condolences to his two sons, Joseph, Jr. and Thomas who should know that through their father's lifetime of public service he had a profound impact on so many and will be sorely missed.