

Assemblymember
Harvey Epstein

Assembly District 74



ALBANY OFFICE

Room 427 LOB, Albany, NY 12248

Phone: (518) 455-5506

EpsteinH@nyassembly.gov

DISTRICT OFFICE

250 Broadway

22nd Floor - Suite 2234

New York, New York 10007

Phone: (212) 979-9696

Dear Neighbor,

We had another impactful week in Albany. This week we are working on our one house budget. I look forward to bringing you budget updates next week.

See you around the district,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harvey Epstein", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Harvey

Forum on the Legalization of Marijuana



Thank you to everyone who came out this past Sunday to have a conversation about legalization in our district. It is important to hear everyone's voice and make sure there is a place for everyone at the table to reverse decades of racial injustice perpetrated by our city and state related to Marijuana. I want to thank Congresswoman Maloney and Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer for coming out to address the crowd and speaking about the importance of restorative justice in the process of legislation, as well as Senators Brad Hoylman and Liz Krueger, Assembly Members Richard Gottfried and Crystal Peoples-Stokes, alongside Council Members Keith Powers and Carlina Rivera. I'd also like to thank Jason F. Reischel from Office of the Census for NYC for speaking about the importance of the upcoming census and what a proper count means for New Yorkers. I want to also take a moment to thank the organizations and micro-businesses that sponsored our event, like Avenues for Justice, Black Ash Cannabis, Cannacclusive, Cannabis Culture Association, Come Back Daily Community Development Project, CUNY Economic Development Clinic, East Harlem Preservation, High Mi Madre, Loisaída, Inc., Ourturnatives, The People's Dispensary of Oakland, Revel, and We Rise to Legalize. Kassandra Frederique from Drug Policy Alliance started off the conference to explain the racial and economic justice issues with legalization and the historical racism experienced by communities of color in the "war on drugs."

Safe Firearm Storage Saves Lives, Promotes Responsible Gun Ownership

This week, the Assembly passed legislation which will expand current requirements that guns are kept in safe storage repositories, especially in households with children (A.2686A, Paulin).

Under current law, safe storage of guns is only required if a person living in the household is federally prohibited from owning a gun, but not if there are children in the house. Today's legislation would require that, in households with children and individuals prohibited from possessing a gun by federal or state law, all guns are safely stored when not in possession of the gun owner. In homes with children, failure to safely store guns would be a class A misdemeanor. Individuals would also be required to safely store their guns when children are present in their homes, even if the children do not reside there.

Assembly Passes Legislation to Raise Purchasing Age for Tobacco Products and E-cigs to 21

This week, I helped pass legislation that would increase the purchasing age for tobacco products and electronic cigarettes from 18 to 21 years old (A.558-A, Rosenthal).

The best way to reduce the number of smokers and e-cigarette users is to prevent the initiation of use. By delaying children and young adults' ability to access tobacco products and electronic cigarettes, we will reduce the likelihood they ever start using the products, creating a healthier New York.

Assembly Passes Legislation to Lower Lead Level Threshold Standard for Children

We want nothing more than for our kids to be healthy, safe and happy. We'd do anything to protect them and provide a better future. But sometimes there are invisible dangers, like lead, that we don't know about until it's too late.

This week, the Assembly took an important and much-needed step in safeguarding our kids from lead poisoning by passing a measure to lower the statutory standard for elevated blood lead levels to reflect the most recent guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (A.5779, Ryan).

This bill also requires that any future changes to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' recommendations receive immediate state consideration. Lead exposure can lead to severe health complications, affecting growth, behavior and development. 1 It also disproportionately affects lower-income and minority children. 2 Lowering the standard will help ensure unsafe lead levels receive a swift response.

In The News

High times: Equity, home-grown...lot of pot issues as legalization nears

Lawmakers React To Spending Limits Set By NY Comptroller

Pied-à-terre tax could help pay for MTA, says Cuomo's budget director

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