

# COMMUNITY NEWS

from Assemblyman

# J. GARY PRETLOW

89<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Friends,

The 2013 state legislative session proved again that New York State has turned the corner toward building a brighter future. Working together with Governor Cuomo, we passed legislation that will boost our economy, create jobs and cut taxes. We also fought for equal rights, successfully restored funding to protect our most vulnerable citizens and raised the minimum wage.

This year marked the state's third consecutive on-time budget. The fiscal plan makes a commitment to putting more money in the pockets of working families by extending a middle-class personal income tax reduction for three more years, locking in the lowest rate in 60 years. We also reduced energy taxes that will save customers \$500 million by fiscal year 2017-18. In addition, working families will benefit from the creation of a \$350 tax credit per child for families with incomes between \$40,000 and \$300,000, which will provide much-needed relief as parents and guardians struggle to meet the ever-rising costs of raising children.

We also passed the most comprehensive gun safety law in the country in order to save lives, increased penalties for repeat child abusers, assisted New Yorkers as they rebuild from the devastating effects of Superstorm Sandy and created a \$1 billion affordable housing program to preserve and create 14,300 affordable housing units, which will also create jobs and stabilize distressed areas.

Our work for the people of New York continues on and please know that I remain committed to getting things done for Yonkers' and Mount Vernon's hard-working families.

Sincerely,

J. Gary Pretlow



Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow with the Mount Vernon City Schools.

## OUR CHILDREN, OUR FUTURE

I am pleased to announce that I helped pass a 2013-14 state budget that increases school aid by \$436 million over the executive's budget proposal, or a \$936.6 million increase over last year.

Our communities are only as strong as our schools—that's why I fought for the funding our schools need to provide a quality education. This year Yonkers received \$170,817,495 in school aid, an increase of 5.30%. The budget also includes \$25 million for full-day and half-day pre-kindergarten grants to allow for more full-day pre-K programs across the state and additional half-day pre-K slots.

Too many of our local schools are struggling to maintain a quality education for our children while keeping property taxes down. Increasing state aid will give our children access to programs that help in their development and better prepare them for the jobs of the future. Also, more education aid will give property taxpayers relief and help save jobs at our schools.

### Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow

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## RENEWING THE PROMISE TO INNER-CITY YOUTH

The 2013-14 budget renews the inner-city youth employment program, providing a \$24 million tax credit over four years for employers who hire unemployed youth 16 to 24 years of age who reside in a city with a population of more than 55,000, such as

*“The benefits of this tax credit are twofold, giving at-risk youth a chance to gain valuable work experience and helping the businesses that hire them with much-needed tax relief.”*



Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow with the City of Mount Vernon's Youth Bureau

Yonkers. The benefits of this tax credit are twofold, giving at-risk youth a chance to gain valuable work experience and helping the businesses that hire them with much-needed tax relief. For many, this could be a first job where they learn the value of working.

The program and credit will be available to employers in the clean energy, health care, advanced manufacturing and conservation industries. Eligible employers would receive up to \$4,000 per employee if they retain the worker for an entire year.



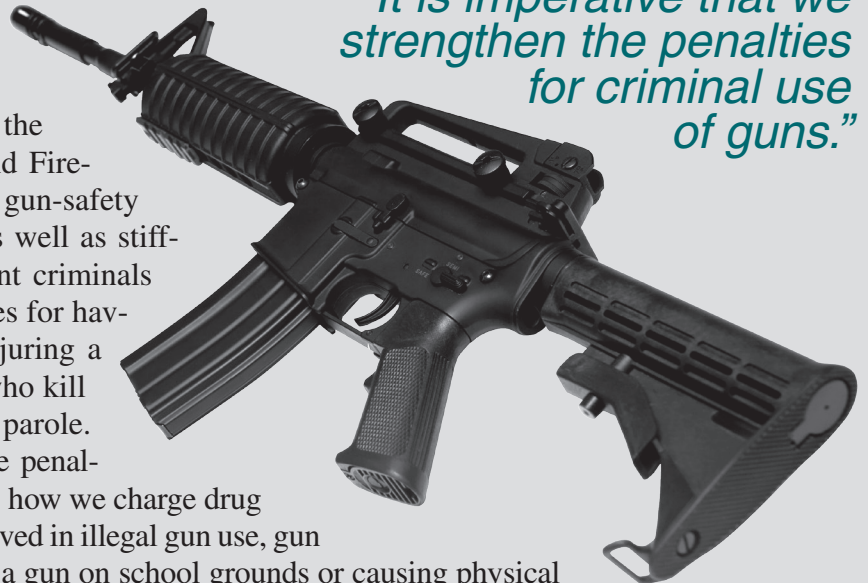
Yonkers residents touring the Capitol with Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow and Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano

## PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY

I am pleased to announce that I helped pass a comprehensive gun-safety law in an effort to curb the devastating gun violence that has ravaged New York State and the country. The law is titled the NY SAFE Act (Secured Ammunition and Firearms Enforcement Act) and it strengthens gun-safety measures by banning assault weapons as well as stiffens penalties for drug dealers and violent criminals involved in gun crimes, increases penalties for having a gun on school grounds and for injuring a child with a gun and ensures that those who kill first responders face life in prison without parole.

It is imperative that we strengthen the penalties for criminal use of guns. This includes how we charge drug dealers and violent criminals who are involved in illegal gun use, gun purchasing for prohibited persons, having a gun on school grounds or causing physical injury to a child with a gun. We can do better and this law will help us get there.

*“It is imperative that we strengthen the penalties for criminal use of guns.”*



## WORKING TO BUILD A STRONG ECONOMY

In the successful culmination of a years-long battle waged by the Assembly Majority, the 2013-14 state budget increases the state's minimum wage to \$9.00 per hour by 2016. The Assembly Majority led a strong fight to secure this increase in the minimum wage, voting last year to increase it to \$8.50 per hour and voting twice again this year to raise it to \$9.00 per hour. Raising the minimum wage was the right thing to do for workers and it will put more money into the pockets of those most likely to spend it locally—jumpstarting consumer spending and helping to boost the economy. Additionally, in order to help struggling families in tough times, the weekly unemployment benefit will gradually increase from \$405 per week to 50 percent of the state's weekly wage.

Also included in the budget was a \$365,000 increase to the Minority- and Women-owned Business Development and Lending Program, for a total appropriation of \$1 million, opening state programs to more small businesses. Our minority- and women-owned small businesses (MWBEs) are vital assets to the Yonkers community. I am



committed to keeping them up and running and encouraging more businesses to open their doors right here in Yonkers.

*To help struggling families in tough times, the weekly unemployment benefit will gradually increase from \$405 per week to 50 percent of the state's weekly wage.*



Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow and Assemblywoman Shelley Mayer with the Yonkers Uniformed Firefighters.

## CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

New York State and in particular, the Office of the Attorney General, works hard to protect consumers from unfair and deceptive practices. The Attorney General's Consumer Complaint Office consists of expert advocates with experience in preventing and resolving consumer disputes.



If you have a complaint with regards to banking, automobile, phone service, etc., the Attorney General is available to help you obtain a successful resolution. You can contact the Attorney General's Office at 1 (800) 771-7755, visit [www.ag.ny.gov](http://www.ag.ny.gov) or you can contact my office at (914) 667-0127.

**CLIP AND RETURN**



*As your representative, I can assure you that I am and will continue to work on your behalf in the New York State Assembly. Always remember that you have the power to speak up and inform me of any concerns or comments that you have and would like to discuss with me. Please indicate and return to:*

**Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow, 89<sup>th</sup> District**  
6 Gramatan Avenue, Suite 201, Mt. Vernon, New York 10550

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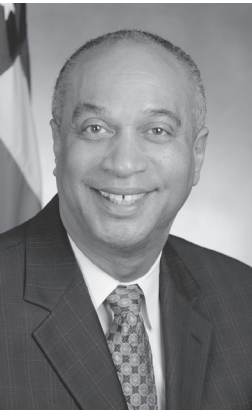
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**FALL 2013**

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