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July 26, 2024

Dear Friends,

Last week I led the Assembly Science and Technology Committee to Buffalo for a series of meetings and site visits on issues related to the work of the committee.

The University of Buffalo is the lead campus in charge of New York's Empire AI Consortium. We also met with TechBuffalo and Microsoft to discuss digital skills training and the importance of that work with the business community. We also toured the New York Power Authority Hydro-Electric Plant near Niagara Falls to discuss our state's renewable energy portfolio.

Later in the week, I returned to Westchester for a briefing on Artificial Intelligence at IBM's Thomas J Watson Research Center in Yorktown Heights.

My work as chair of the Science and Technology Committee focuses on several fast-moving issues that often overlap. They include data privacy, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, digital equity, and clean energy.

This newsletter provides some additional details on last week's meetings and information regarding the challenges ahead.

As always, do not hesitate to contact me or my staff on issues in this e-mail or any matter in which we can be helpful. My office number is 914-939-7028.

Warm regards,



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### **Science and Technology Committee AI Roundtable at University of Buffalo**

Our lead meeting was held with SUNY Chancellor John King at the University of Buffalo National AI Institute for Exceptional Education. SUNY Buffalo is the home of the New York's Empire AI Consortium, a new public/private partnership approved in this year's state budget, which is based on public-benefit focused development of AI.

Chancellor King and a team of SUNY professors provided presentations on recent UB AI projects that included public health, environmental benefits, cybersecurity, privacy protection, and tools to assist students with learning barriers. The roundtable included questions and discussion from legislators with the SUNY experts and demonstration of several AI driven projects by current students.

You can read SUNY's coverage of the event [here](#).



*The assembled officials and professors at the University of Buffalo AI Roundtable included - Seated: Venu Govindaraju, PhD, Vice President of Research and Economic Development; Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes; SUNY Chancellor John King; SUNY Board Trustee Eunice A. Lewin; State Senator Sean Ryan. Standing: Alexander Stone PhD student in Computer Science and Engineering; Assembly members Clyde Vanel and Bill Conrad; X. Christine Wang, PhD, Professor, Lead, National AI Institute for Exceptional Education; Assemblymember Monica Wallace; Chair Steve Otis; Assemblymember Karen McMahon; Diana Aga, PhD SUNY Distinguished Professor and Chair, Department of Chemistry; E. Bruce Pitman Interim Vice President and Chief Information Officer; Kemper E. Lewis, PhD, Dean, School*

*of Engineering and Applied Sciences; Bonnie Kane Lockwood, Western NY Director for Governor Hochul; and Jason Davies, MD, PhD Assistant Professor, Department of Neurosurgery and Bioinformatics.*

It was an informative and fascinating session. From past meetings, I can report that SUNY campuses have been involved in artificial intelligence projects for over 20 years. SUNY is well-positioned to lead the Empire AI consortium that includes seven New York-based founding institutions: Columbia University, Cornell University, New York University, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the State University of New York, the City University of New York, and the Flatiron Institute.



*Assemblyman Otis at AI Roundtable with SUNY Board Trustee Eunice A. Lewin, SUNY Chancellor John King, and Venu Govindaraju, PhD, UB Vice President of Research and Economic Development. Photo: Meredith Forrest Kulwicki*

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### **Digital Equity and Tech Skills Training Roundtable**

We met with representatives of Microsoft, TechBuffalo, and the Buffalo Niagara Partnership for an overview of programming in Western NY focused on equity, workforce, and skilling for the Tech future.

The meeting was timely. TechBuffalo has been selected by Microsoft for their TechSpark grant program to improve economic opportunity in rural and remote communities. The focus of the program is on creating digital inclusion and inclusive economic opportunities.

In addition, the Buffalo-Rochester-Syracuse areas were recently awarded \$40 million in federal funding as a NY Smart I-Corridor Tech Hub, an important step in expanding upstate New York as a global leader in semiconductor manufacturing. The funding will go towards training the next generation of workers to fill jobs in the chip industry, closing gaps in the supply chain by making it easier for local firms to gain access to growth opportunities, and supporting startups across the region.

Our discussion gave the committee an on-the-ground understanding of how technology training brings jobs, opportunity, and outside investment. My meetings with technology companies in the Hudson Valley has brought the

same message: companies are expanding in New York because we have the training and workers to fill those jobs.

We also visited M&T Bank's technology headquarters in Buffalo and heard about how large financial institutions are deeply involved in the newest developments in digital technology and cybersecurity protection.



*Our Digital Equity and Tech Skills Training Roundtable participants after touring the M&T Bank Technology Center. (L to R) Ariana Caplan Marra, Microsoft; Assemblyman Bill Conrad, Steve Otis, Assemblymember Monica Wallace;*

*Dottie Gallagher, Buffalo Niagara Partnership; Assemblyman Clyde Vanel;  
Sarah Tanbakuchi-Ripa, TechBuffalo; and Mike Wisler, CIO M&T Bank.*

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### **New York Power Authority Hydro-Electric Power Plant**



*We toured the NYPA hydropower facility from above, river level  
and underground to learn about the massive infrastructure needed to provide  
renewable electricity. This plant opened in 1961, but hydro plants have  
operated at this site since the 1800's.*

We visited NYPA's largest renewable energy plant, the Niagara Power Station, for a briefing on New York's renewable energy facilities, NYPA's entire system serving local governments, school districts, and government entities, and how the hydropower system works. NYPA's system provides about 25% of New York's electricity, with 80% of their power provided by renewable, affordable hydropower. The turbines are massive in size. The technology is impressive as is the task of maintaining, updating, and operating a system that New Yorkers depend upon to meet our energy needs. NYPA is also very tied to economic development projects around the state. NYPA is also an important player in New York meeting our long-term clean energy targets.

Our briefing was led by NYPA President and CEO Justin Driscoll. The discussion also included NYPA's role in expanding broadband access throughout the state.





*I am pictured here on the Niagara Power Station Meeting with (l to r) Assemblymember Karen McMahan, NYPA President and CEO Justin Driscoll, Assemblyman Bill Conrad, and Assemblyman Clyde Vanel.*

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### **IBM Artificial Intelligence Briefing**

The day after returning from Buffalo I participated in an AI briefing provided by IBM at their Thomas J Watson Research Center in Yorktown Heights. We heard presentations on different categories of advanced computer technology, where future evolution of AI is headed, and about IBM's growth in Westchester

and the Hudson Valley. I was joined by legislative colleagues and staff in what was an informative meeting and site visit.



*Pictured at the IBM AI briefing in Yorktown Heights by two Assembly colleagues Ed Ra and Michaelle Solages and State Senator Pete Harkham. We are standing in front of a model of an IBM AI computer.*

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### HEALTHIER MAMARONECK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



## INVITE MEMBERS OF THE WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY TO THE ACCESS TO CARE HEALTH FAIR

**Saturday, August 3, 2024**  
**10:00 AM to 2:00 PM**  
**Rain Date: Saturday, August 24**

**Open Door Mamaroneck**  
**689 Mamaroneck Avenue**  
**Mamaroneck, NY 10543**

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Information from community organizations, live DJ, activities, and more for the whole family!

## **NEW YORK BLOOD CENTER ISSUES URGENT CALL FOR O+ AND O-DONORS**

*Current inventory is at its lowest since COVID-19 shutdown*

New York Blood Center (NYBC) has issued an urgent call for type O+ and O- blood donations. This dangerous shortage is impacting local hospitals, and is also a disturbing national trend, with Type O shortages reported across the U.S. The current inventory of type O blood is the lowest it's been since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Type O+ is the most common blood type, representing nearly 40% of the U.S. population. Type O- is the universal blood type and is commonly used in emergency settings. A shortage of both types, both locally and nationally, poses serious concerns for our healthcare system, and the need for donors is critical.

NYBC hosts daily blood drives and operates 19 area donor centers to reach donors and meet local hospital needs. Blood donors can give every 56 days, and platelet donors can give twice per month. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently lifted several blood donor eligibility restrictions. To view current eligibility guidelines, visit [nybc.org](https://nybc.org) or call 800.688.0900.

**To make an appointment, donors can call 1-800-933-2566 or visit [nybc.org](https://nybc.org). Can't donate blood? You can still support NYBC's mission by texting 'NYBC' to '20222' to give \$25.**

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# Donate Backpacks & School Supplies!

Help us support local students by donating backpacks and school supplies!

Drop off backpacks at St. Thomas Church, 3rd door, by August 30

168 W. Boston Post Rd  
Mamaroneck, NY 10543



School Supply Checklist



To celebrate the start of a new school year, CRC has committed to creating and distributing 200 backpacks to local kids. You can drop backpacks off at St. Thomas Church from August 19 through August 30th. CRC is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m, closed every day from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. for lunch.



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