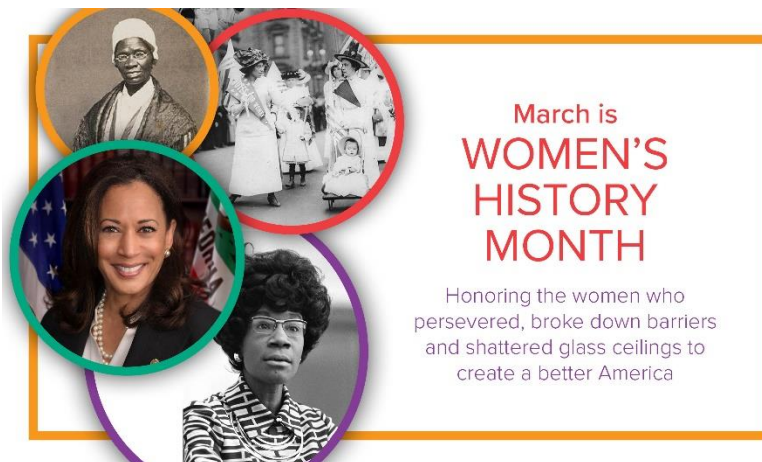




Dear Friends,

It is budget season and therefore a very busy time in Albany. I am pleased to report that the Assembly's one-house budget, which is the Assembly's response to the Governor's budget proposal, will be coming out shortly. The State Senate will soon release its own one-house budget, and then the two chambers will come together to develop a single budget response to the Governor's proposal. More details to come.

March is Women's History Month, a good time for us all to remember that women have contributed far more to this country than they have ever been recognized for. From Harriet Tubman to Sandra Day O'Connor to Rosa Parks to Sally Ride, women have always been part of our nation's history, even when their voices were silenced and their votes suppressed. This month reminds us to learn from our past mistakes, celebrate those that have come before, and pave the way for future generations of women to come.



On a related note, **thank you to all those who put in nominations for the 2022 Women of Distinction Awards**. We are thrilled with the overwhelming response, although it comes as no surprise to any of us that there are so many accomplished women in the 93rd Assembly District. ***Because of the size of the response, please note that we have decided to postpone the awards ceremony until April to give us sufficient time to review the nominations and follow up with the nominees.*** Please stay tuned!

Finally, **a belated thank you to everyone who donated to our [914Cares](#) snow boot and sneaker drive!** We had a wonderful visit to their North White Plains offices last month, where we were given a tour and helped to assemble Flow kits. The organization focuses on investing to end poverty in Westchester, which is much more prevalent than many realize. Every month, partnering with over 80 community organizations, 914Cares gives away diapers and baby products, clothing and shoes for babies, children and teens, personal care products (including period, aka "Flow kits") and books. It's an amazing operation that does so much good for residents of Westchester in need.



[New York State Supporting Ukraine](#)

Our thoughts and prayers are with the brave citizens of Ukraine, who are fighting for democracy and resisting the yoke of Russia. With his KGB training in full fury, Vladimir Putin has turned his back on the civilized world and drawn his nation into dark and dangerous isolationism, no doubt with the aim of re-establishing the Soviet Union.

But thoughts and prayers are not enough. We must all do what we can to help.

New York is home to the largest Ukrainian community in the United States, and while not surprised, I was so pleased to hear Governor Hochul state publicly that [Ukrainian refugees are welcome in our state](#). She also signed an [executive order](#) prohibiting the state from doing business with Russia. Meanwhile, NYS Comptroller Tom DiNapoli is [working to divest](#) the NYS pension fund of investments in Russian companies.

On the legislative side, we would like to see this go further. **I am proud to be cosponsoring the bipartisan [Stop Russian Aggression Act](#)**, sponsored by my colleagues NYS Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick and Assemblyman Nader Sayegh. The legislation would block the awarding of New York State contracts not only to Russian businesses, but to any company doing business in Russia. It would also require the NYS pension fund to divest its investments in these companies.

Finally, **for those of you who might be wondering how you can help**, please consider supporting [one of the many organizations](#) working to aid the people of Ukraine.

[Skyrocketing Electricity Bills](#)

I continue to hear from many of you regarding the sharp increase in electricity bills and am pressing the state to take prompt and decisive action. Last week, I advocated to NYS Assembly leadership that we take such action in three key areas:

1) **Provide Fixed Rate Pricing.** As I mentioned in a [previous newsletter](#), residents in every municipality in my district except Harrison and North Castle can sign up for fixed-rate electricity through non-profit [Westchester Power](#), which is part of [Sustainable Westchester](#), a consortium of nearly every municipality in the County. This is especially important in the Con Edison service area, where the most dramatic increases have occurred. The Public Service Commission should require the “default utilities” such as Con Edison and NYSEG to offer fixed-rate pricing as well. Years back, each of these companies had subsidiaries that offered such an option. They have since been sold off or disbanded.

2) **Impose a Moratorium on Utility Shut-Offs.** Just as the pandemic emergency prompted a shut-off moratorium, this current spike in electricity prices requires a temporary moratorium as well. It is unconscionable that those making the choice between buying groceries or paying their electric bill could face having their electricity cut off in order to put food on the table.

3) **Arrearage Assistance Fund.** It is estimated that there is over \$1.2 billion statewide in arrearages on utility bills. I advocated that substantial funds be put into the budget for additional arrearage assistance to help those who need it to catch up on their bills.

In the meantime, for those of you who are struggling to pay your bills, there may be programs that can help through the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, such as the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). [Click here to learn more](#). Need assistance applying? The Westchester County Department of Social Services is available to help.



DO YOU NEED HELPING PAYING FOR HEAT AND UTILITIES?

HELP IS AVAILABLE
for payment assistance and repair and maintenance.

To apply online, visit mybenefits.ny.gov
For assistance, contact the Westchester County Department of Social Services at (914)-995-3333 or visit your local district office:

Mount Vernon District Office 100 East First Street Mount Vernon, NY 10550-3442 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mon. - Fri.	Peekskill District Office 750 Washington Street Peekskill, NY 10566-5499 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mon. - Fri.
White Plains District Office 85 Court Street White Plains, NY 10601-4201 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mon. - Fri.	Yonkers District Office 131 Warburton Avenue Yonkers, NY 10701 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mon. - Fri.

For more information, visit socialservices.westchestergov.com
*** After Hours Emergency Contact: 914-995-2099



Update on Accessory Dwelling Units and Transit-Oriented Development Legislation

As some of you might have heard, Governor Hochul had proposed legislation in her Executive budget to require municipalities to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) as of right. In other words, with certain limitations, ADUs would not be subject to the local zoning process such as Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals review. I joined with many of my colleagues to urge an approach that exempted municipalities from any such law if they already have in place local laws to encourage affordable housing (which most, if not all of the municipalities in my Assembly district already have).

Given the legislation's far-reaching impacts, there also needs to be a discussion with local elected leaders, as well as robust community involvement.

The Governor's budget also included a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) provision, which would require municipalities to allow as of right up to 25 affordable housing units within one-half mile of any transit facility. As much as I support affordable housing, and often the areas surrounding transit facilities are ideal locations considering the ease of transportation and accessibility of shopping, I do not feel that this provision was done in the right way. Every transit facility location is situated differently and municipalities need to take a lot of things into consideration to ensure development is done thoughtfully and properly. There should not be a one-size-fits-all approach. This proposal could have serious adverse impacts on communities in my district, and I oppose it.

I was pleased that Governor Hochul removed the ADU provision from the Executive Budget, except as it pertains to the legalization of ADUs in New York City. She removed the TOD provision entirely.

ADDITIONAL Free Rapid COVID-19 Tests Now Available

As many (if not all of you) reading this newsletter know, due to the rapid decline in COVID-19 cases, New York's mask mandate [has ended](#) (including [in schools](#)), although masks are still required in certain settings such as healthcare settings, nursing homes, public transit and transportation hubs, and on trains, planes and airports in accordance with federal regulations.

What this means, however, is that getting tested when necessary continues to be crucial to protect yourself and others.

For those of you who have already taken advantage of the free at-home rapid COVID-19 tests available from the federal government, good news! **Beginning this week, every household can order a SECOND rapid test kit for free at www.covidtests.gov** (each kit contains four tests). If you haven't yet ordered your first kit, you are now eligible to order up to two kits, for a total of eight free tests per household. Tests are delivered free of charge via the U.S. Postal Service.



COVIDTESTS.GOV

COVIDtests.gov - Free at-home COVID-19 tests

Additionally, **insurance companies and group health plans must now cover the cost of eight over-the-counter at-home COVID-19 tests per person each month.** Some pharmacies now even allow you to order them for free, straight from their website, with pickup available after confirmation of insurance coverage. [Click here](#) for more info or contact your local pharmacy for more information.



[Reporting Potholes on State Roads](#)

Finally, after a rough winter, we are receiving an increased number of reports of state roads in disrepair. **If you experience potholes on a [state road](#), please [report it](#) to the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) via their 24-hr hotline, 1-800-POTHOLE (1.800.768.4653).**



In the meantime, if you feel the level of disrepair has become critical, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office at (914) 244-4450 or burdickc@nyassembly.gov, so that we can reach out to the DOT about the need for swift repair.

As always, if there are any issues that you would like to see covered in a future newsletter, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at burdickc@nyassembly.gov (or simply reply to this email). **Please also follow me on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) for the most up-to-date information.**

Miss any of our previous newsletters? You can [find them here](#).

Sincerely yours,



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