



Dear Friends,

In the early hours of Saturday morning, the NYS Assembly finished its legislative session and adjourned for the year. As with last year, it was a whirlwind of important legislation being debated and passed.

While not every bill I had hoped to see cross the finish line made it, a great deal was accomplished, including on issues that I heard about from many of my constituents: **gun safety and reproductive healthcare**. I was also very pleased to see a number of pieces of legislation that I was sponsoring pass both chambers, including one that further strengthens New York as a safe haven for those who come here from other states for reproductive health care.

### [Gun Safety Legislation](#)

The legislation passed in the closing days of the session follows on the heels of the mass shootings in Buffalo that claimed the lives of 10 people and was perpetrated by an avowed white supremacist, and in Uvalde, Texas, where 19 children and two teachers were killed at an elementary school. As our nation grieves over these most recent, devastating tragedies we are left feeling like this is just another day in America. That is simply not acceptable. For too long, we've seen these tragedies repeat over and over. Meanwhile, the majority of the country is pleading for change and saying enough is enough. And the statistics are startling. In 2020, [firearm deaths overtook motor vehicle fatalities](#) as the leading cause of death for American children and adolescents.

**Here in New York, we're taking action to advance commonsense gun safety measures to protect our communities from the scourge of gun violence tearing our nation apart.** While New York does have among the strongest gun safety laws in the nation, we in the legislature took further action to keep guns away from the wrong people. A [strong legislative package](#) passed both chambers and was recently signed into law by Governor Hochul. Among other provisions, the package:

- Expands the definition of a firearm to capture firearms not presently regulated;
- Requires that an individual obtain a license prior to purchasing a semiautomatic rifle, which would also raise the age limit to 21;
- Requires that law enforcement agencies report seized or recovered guns to the criminal gun clearinghouse and provide relevant data for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' (ATF) data sharing program and National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN);

- Requires gun dealers to implement a security plan for securing firearms; prohibits individuals under 18 years of age from entering certain locations on a gun dealer's premises without parental accompaniment; requires dealers to provide training to all employees on the conduct of firearm, rifle, and shotgun transfers; and requires state police to conduct inspections of gun dealers every three years;
- Strengthens the red flag law by allowing health care practitioners to petition the court and require police and district attorneys to file extreme risk protection order (ERPO) petitions upon credible information that an individual is likely to engage in conduct that would result in serious harm to themselves or others. The bill also clarifies that a report from a practitioner that an individual that may be at risk of self-harm or violence, which is concurred by a county mental health commissioner, must be considered when that individual applies for a firearm license;
- Eliminates the grandfathering of large-capacity ammunition-feeding devices that were lawfully possessed prior to the enactment of the 2013 SAFE Act or manufactured before 1994;
- Makes the threat of mass harm a crime.

Finally, the Assembly passed [a resolution](#) urging Congress to immediately act and reinstate the federal assault weapons ban that expired in 2004.

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## **Reproductive Health Care**

With the Supreme Court poised to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, and a woman's right to make decisions about her own body under assault in many parts of this country, **the legislature in New York [passed a package of five bills](#) to protect reproductive health care providers in New York, as well as to provide a safe haven to those who come to New York seeking reproductive health care.** The package:

- Provides that a New York licensed health care practitioner would not be subject to professional misconduct in the course of providing reproductive health services to residents of states in which such services are illegal. It also provides that an applicant for a license disciplined in another state solely for performing an abortion is not to be denied licensure in New York unless the action would have constituted professional misconduct in New York;
- Prohibits medical malpractice insurers from taking an adverse action against a New York provider solely because the provider legally provided reproductive health care services to an individual from out of state or legally provided services via telehealth to an out of state individual;
- Adds reproductive health care service providers, employees, volunteers, patients, and immediate family members of providers to an address confidentiality program;
- Provides certain protections related to abortion services or procedures, including prohibiting:
  - Extradition;

- Law enforcement from arresting anyone performing, aiding the performance of, or procuring a legal abortion in New York;
  - Providing information to out of state agencies;
  - The issuance of subpoenas or orders to aid in a deposition for out-of-state proceedings unless certain circumstances exist.
- The Freedom from Interference with Reproductive and Endocrine Health Advocacy and Travel Exercise (FIRE HATE) Act, discussed below.
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## **My Sponsored Legislation**

I was pleased that in the closing days of session, the legislature passed several of my bills (I am proud to report that 12 bills I sponsored this year made it over the finish line). These bills range from further protection for individuals seeking reproductive health care, to broadening the penal law definition of sexual assault on a child, to strengthening employment opportunities for people with disabilities, to protecting local freshwater wetlands. Also, for the three towns I represent, extending (at their request) their local hotel tax.

### ***The FIRE HATE Act***

Since the disclosure of a draft opinion of the U.S Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v Wade*, considerable interest has been raised to further strengthen New York law to protect reproductive health care rights. **Together with State Senator Alessandra Biaggi, I introduced [legislation to reinforce New York as a safe haven for out-of-state people seeking reproductive or endocrine health services](#).** The measure, the Freedom from Interference with Reproductive and Endocrine Health Advocacy and Travel Exercise (FIRE HATE) Act, now goes to Governor Kathy Hochul for her signature. This bill establishes a cause of action for unlawful interference with certain rights that are protected in New York State, including but not limited to the legal termination of a pregnancy or for gender-affirming health services. The bill – an amendment to the civil rights law – allows any person who comes to New York to exercise these rights, and has those rights interfered with, to bring a cause of action in New York against the interfering person or entity.

My thanks to attorney, choice advocate, and co-chair of the National Trans Bar Association Kristen Browde, for bringing the original draft of the legislation to my and Senator Biaggi's attention.

### ***Broadening the Definition of Sexual Assault on a Child***

Last year, one of the residents in my district came to me to recount the horrible sexual assault on his daughter years ago, who was nine years old at the time. The crime was undiscovered for many years, and the statute of limitations had run out. Furthermore, the crime in question, being assaulted with fingers, was not explicitly included in the definition of the crime of sexual conduct against a child in the third degree. He was overcome with emotion as he asked me if something could be done to change the law to bring justice to future victims.

This [bill](#) fills the gap in the definition under the penal law of the offense of sexual conduct against a child in the third degree, a felony, by expanding the definition to include the use of a finger.

While this bill will not change what occurred, it hopefully will provide some closure and peace for the parents and victim of that assault many years ago. The bill, which also passed the Senate sponsored by Senator James Skoufis, now goes to the Governor.

### ***Strengthening Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities***

As I discussed in my [last newsletter](#), during Disability Legislative Awareness Day, the Assembly unanimously passed my legislation that requires school districts to provide same-day notification to parents of children with disabilities after the use of behavioral restraints, such as seclusion or physical restraint.

As the chair of the NYS Assembly Subcommittee on Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities, I also introduced two bills following the Assembly hearing last fall that focused on barriers to employment, both of them sponsored in the Senate by Senator John Manion.

**One of these bills updates a provision in the NYS Finance Law known as the "preferred source program," which provides that NYS agencies provide a preference in the award of contracts to firms that provide employment for people with disabilities, provided the bid is no more than 15% greater than the lowest bid.** The bill modernizes the forty-five-year-old provision not just by replacing archaic terms, but by adjusting work ratios (thresholds) from 75% to 50% of a contract that must be performed by people with disabilities and by increasing the threshold for the Office of General Services (OGS) to review of contracts from \$50,000 to \$250,000. This will result in more employment because non-profit disability service providers and their social enterprises that employ individuals with disabilities find it very difficult to compete for contracts with the 75% requirement, as it frequently takes more people with disabilities to perform a function than people without disabilities (making it very difficult to stay within the aforementioned requirement that the bid be no greater than 15% above the lowest bid). By lowering the threshold, it will enable preferred sources to be more price competitive. Likewise, the administrative burden to a procuring agency for OGS review is a disincentive to agencies to participate in the preferred source program. By increasing the threshold to \$250,000, it both recognizes inflationary, minimum wage, and prevailing wage increases over the last 19 years, and will incentivize agencies to participate in the program.

**A second bill flowing from the hearing would establish in the NYS Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) a voluntary training and certification program for employers that have taken the EmployAbility Pledge and that support an inclusive workplace.** The program will promote techniques and strategies employers can implement to increase diversity in the employer's workforce through the hiring of individuals with disabilities and to increase diversity in the selection of the employer's supply chains by working with companies that employ individuals with disabilities. As part of the program, OPWDD will develop a series of online/virtual training programs for employers for key components related to training employers on topics including (i) sensitivity training on disability disclosure; (ii) providing reasonable accommodations to employees with disabilities; (iii) tax credits for employers who employ individuals with disabilities; (iv) website accessibility; (v) interviewing individuals with disabilities and appropriate job opening advertisements; (vi) workplace inclusion of individuals with disabilities; (vii) supply chain diversity; (viii) the role of job coaches in assisting employers; and (ix) corporate partnership training for employers for purposes of qualifying for preferred source procurement status.

## **Wetlands Protection**

Since 1977, local governments have been given the authority to implement a freshwater wetlands protection law in accordance with standards set by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Local governments also have jurisdiction over all freshwater wetlands within their boundaries that are fewer than 12.4 acres. This [bill](#) would simply expand that authorization to include pesticide application. It would not, however, authorize local governments to regulate the pesticides, just their application on wetlands.

Years ago, as Bedford Town Supervisor, I learned that the DEC preempted local authority. **This bill would amend the Environmental Conservation Law in relation to prohibiting, with certain limitations, the application of pesticides to certain local freshwater wetlands.** This bill would enable local governments that regulate wetlands to prohibit the application of pesticides, provided that such local law does not prohibit pesticide application for the control of invasive species, pests of significant public health importance, noxious weeds, or protection of native plants.

My thanks to Senator Pete Harckham for sponsoring this bill in the Senate.

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## **Other Laws Passed**

I also wanted to mention a number of other bills of interest that passed in those final days of session, with links to additional information:

- The [Advanced Building Codes, Appliance and Equipment Efficiency Standards Act of 2022](#), legislation to increase the state's appliance efficiency standards, reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with buildings and align the Energy Code with the clean energy and climate policies of the state.
- The [John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of New York](#), to codify and strengthen the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 into state law.
- The [Green CHIPS](#) bill, which would incentivize semiconductor manufacturers to build new factories in New York State by making them eligible for the Excelsior Jobs Tax Credit Program.
- Recognizing that nursing is a physically and mentally taxing profession that requires suitable time off, [legislation](#) that updates a 2008 law limiting the number of consecutive hours worked by registered nurses and licensed practical nurses, to include nurses in-home care settings. It also guarantees these nurses the right to refuse overtime hours without fear of repercussions.
- The [New York Collegiate Athletic Participation Compensation Act](#), legislation that will ensure that student-athletes can receive compensation for the use of their name, image, or likeness, as well as allow student-athletes to obtain professional representation.
- [Allysa's Law](#), which would require school district-wide safety teams to consider, as part of their review of the comprehensive district-wide safety plan, the installation of a panic alarm system to silently alert law enforcement in the event of a life-threatening or emergency situation.



I would be remiss in not also mentioning the [Adult Survivors' Act](#) (of which I was a proud cosponsor), which passed not in the very final days of session, but a couple of weeks back. The legislation, which has been signed by Governor Hochul, extends a one-year look-back window to adult survivors of sexual offenses. This measure also allows for the revival of time-barred civil lawsuits based on sex crimes committed against individuals who were 18 years of age or older. I am so pleased that with the passage of this Act, we can help right this wrong and stand up for all survivors.

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## Opportunities to Celebrate Pride & Juneteenth

June is a terrific month for meaningful celebration, including for Pride Month, as well as for Juneteenth. And in the 93rd Assembly District, we do it right!

### *Pride Celebrations*

This [past weekend](#), there were Pride Celebrations in Bedford, Pound Ridge, New Castle & White Plains. However, the celebrations have just begun! Below are events coming up in the next several weeks, and please also [click here](#) for additional information about celebrations throughout the area.



**Bedford\*Lewisboro\*Pound Ridge  
2022 Pride Calendar**

Sat. 6/4 Pound Ridge Color Run  
Pound Ridge Elementary 9am

Fri. 6/10 *Pieces of Us* Screening  
Bedford Playhouse 6pm

Sat. 6/11 Family Flag Dance  
Lewisboro Town Park 11am

Wed. 6/22 LGBTQ+ Policy & Advocacy  
Bedford Presbyterian Church 6pm

Sun. 6/26 Pride in the Park  
Onatru Farm Park 2-7pm



Bedford\*Lewisboro\*Pound Ridge

**PRIDE IN THE PARK**  
SUNDAY JUNE 26, 2022  
ONATRU FARM PARK  
99 ELMWOOD RD, SOUTH SALEM, NY

FREE & FAMILY FRIENDLY!

2pm - Drag Queen Storytime  
co-sponsor Lewisboro Library

3pm - Pet Pride Parade  
prizes for the best dressed pet!

3:30pm - Drag Queens & Flag Ceremony  
Evian Watters (aka. Darius Harper of Kinky Boots, Cirque du Soleil, etc.)

4-6pm - Food Trucks, Community Fair, and Fun!

6pm - *Queer-Larious*, a Comedy Showcase  
presented by Hard Headed Comedy

@LewisboroCelebratesPride

## Juneteenth Celebrations

There are also a number of Juneteenth Celebrations throughout the area, in White Plains, Mount Kisco, Lewisboro & Bedford. Please click on the images for more information!



Free Event

## Celebrate Juneteenth

Presented in collaboration with the Town of Bedford

Sunday June 19, 2022 at 4:00 pm

FRIENDS FIELD

RSVP NOW

ADD TO CALENDAR



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## [Our Interns Visit Albany!](#)

Last week, some of my district office interns - Nadia Nabeel, Isabelle Sampere, Flora Elghanayan, and Jack Quinn - were able to make the trip up to Albany for the day. It was an exciting day to be in Albany with the end of session nearing. I introduced them on the floor of the Assembly Chamber after they toured the Legislative Office Building and the Capitol. Seeing the wonder and awe in their eyes reminds me of what a remarkable place our Capitol is and how privileged I am to work here. And they even got to see two of my bills pass on the Assembly floor! I'm so grateful to have such wonderful interns and I look forward to seeing great things from them in the future.



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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](mailto: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,

*Chris Burdick*

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