



Dear Friends,

With the [budget finished](#), the focus for the Legislature now turns to getting as much legislation as possible over the finish line before the end of session, scheduled for June 8th.

In Albany, my goal is always to do the best I can to represent the needs of my district. **I sponsor legislation that I believe will improve the lives of those whom I represent and people throughout the state.** I spend considerable time developing legislation and obtaining feedback from counsel, committee staff, and those who would be affected. It is not easy to get a bill passed by the Legislature nor should it be given the thousands, if not millions, of people it can affect. Some bills can take years to develop and get across the finish line. Others will never see the light of day.

With that in mind, **I wanted to use this newsletter to give you a sense of the legislation I am working on**, some of which will pass before the end of session, and some of which I will continue to work on in the months and perhaps even years to come.

[My Sponsored Legislation](#)

People with Disabilities

One major area of focus for me pertains to people with disabilities, which not only affects those with disabilities but also their loved ones and the people who take care of them. As a member of the NYS Assembly Standing Committee on People with Disabilities, and as chair of the Subcommittee on Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities, I have been proud to sponsor several bills this session to help people with disabilities, two of which have already passed the Assembly:

- Recognizing the ubiquitous role of websites in our daily lives, and the barriers that people with disabilities face in accessing and utilizing them, **I have sponsored a bill that requires state agencies to conform their websites to the most current version of the Web Content Availability Guidelines**, adopted by the World Wide Web Consortium for accessibility. The Assembly passed the bill last week, and I am optimistic that the Senate will follow suit.
- I am pleased that the newly adopted 2023-2024 budget provides for an increase in the number of positions in state agencies designated for people with physical or intellectual disabilities, from 1,200 to 1,700. Recognizing that there are many in the disability community who yearn to work but are unable to meet the demands of a full-time position, **I have sponsored a bill to boost employment opportunities for people with disabilities in state agencies and departments by allowing some full-time civil service positions, already set aside for people with disabilities, to be split into part-time positions.** This bill passed the Assembly on Monday during Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day (*discussed below*).

- I have also introduced a bill to amend the State Fire Prevention and Building Code to ensure that **there is an efficient emergency evacuation plan for people with disabilities who work or live in high-rise buildings** in the state.

The Environment

Prior to serving in elected office in Bedford, I chaired the Town's wetlands commission and found that NYS law prevented the Town from prohibiting the application of pesticides to its wetlands. **I am sponsoring legislation that would remove this restriction, allowing towns to make these decisions for themselves.**

The Legislature passed the bill during the last session with the support of many municipalities in Westchester County, the Nature Conservancy, and other environmental organizations. The chemical industry and other industry groups opposed the bill. The Governor vetoed it at the end of 2022, asserting that the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation was sufficiently regulating pesticides and local regulation is unnecessary. I strongly disagree.

I have reintroduced the bill this session with the goal of the Governor reversing her decision.

Protecting the Rights of Rape Victims

I have introduced legislation to prohibit the use of a sexual assault victim's DNA and RNA, obtained during a sexual assault forensic exam, from being used to prosecute that victim for a separate crime. As reported in national news stories, a rape victim in San Francisco underwent a sexual assault forensic exam and was subsequently arrested when her DNA came back linked to a property crime case. Allowing such use of DNA and RNA might have a chilling effect on the reporting of rape or other sexual assault and thereby hinder law enforcement's ability to apprehend the perpetrator.

Protecting & Supporting Transgender Individuals

Concerned about heightened assaults on the rights of transgender individuals, **I am sponsoring legislation to protect transgender youth and families with transgender members.** We are seeing an unfortunate trend of bills introduced and even signed into law in some states that would essentially allow a parent or other individual to abduct a child from one state and bring the child to the state in which the parent or individual resides, giving the courts of that state the ability to then award custody if the child, the child's sibling, or their custodial parent is undergoing gender-affirming treatment (claiming the treatment constitutes child abuse). I am working on legislation meant to protect children and their parents from such an outcome.

I am also sponsoring legislation that would require mass transit providers who require individuals to identify their gender when purchasing a ticket to provide additional gender options, accurately reflecting a traveler's gender. This includes permitting the use of an 'X' to conform their gender to their NYS driver's license or non-driver identification.

Helping My Municipalities & Institutions

I also sponsor legislation to directly assist the municipalities of my district, as well as the institutions located here. For instance, to help the residents of West Harrison, I am sponsoring a bill to authorize the Town of Harrison to expand its residential parking permit area, where residents

can park during the day without regard to the existing two- and four-hour parking restrictions. The purpose is to ensure that residents are not crowded out of on-street parking by nonresident commuters avoiding the cost of paid parking at the railroad station.

With SUNY Purchase in my district, I am sponsoring a bill to expand the permitted use of proceeds from the lease of lands located at the university, to allow those funds to be used to support current full-time faculty positions.

For more information about any of these bills and other legislation I am sponsoring, [please click here](#).

Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day

This past Monday was Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day in the NYS Assembly, in honor of which the Assembly passed a package of bills to improve the lives of people with disabilities. As discussed above, among the bills passed was my bill to boost employment opportunities for people with disabilities in state agencies and departments by allowing some full-time civil service positions, already set aside for people with disabilities, to be split into part-time positions. (*For more information about the legislative package, [please click here](#).*)

The day began in the “Well” of the Legislative Office Building with tables of disability advocacy and employment groups, the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), the Civil Service Commission, and others promoting and advancing the needs of people with disabilities. **In my remarks to those assembled, I said that too often those with disabilities are shunted aside and ignored, not accorded the respect and dignity they deserve.** I am hopeful that that mindset is changing and applauded all those who came to Albany for their advocacy.

I also [attended a press conference](#) to support my colleague Assemblymember Harvey Epstein's bill to “**Stop the Shock.**” While electro-shock therapy is outlawed in New York, a loophole exists whereby the state can still send people with disabilities to the Judge Rotenberg Center in Massachusetts, the last remaining institution in the country that uses this practice. This legislation, also known as Andre's Law (named after Andre McCollins, who as an autistic teenager in 2002 was hospitalized after being tied to a board and electro-shocked thirty-one times over seven hours at an approved out-of-state facility) would close that loophole.



Mount Kisco Coffee & Conversation

Mount Kisco residents (or anyone else interested in joining!), **please save the date for an upcoming Coffee & Conversation** with County Executive George Latimer, County Legislator Erika Pierce, Mount Kisco Mayor Gina Picnich, and myself. Saturday, June 3rd from 1-2 pm at the Mount Kisco Public Library.

My thanks to Legislator Pierce for spearheading the organization of this event.

Your elected officials invite you to join your friends and neighbors for a casual conversation over coffee.



County Executive
GEORGE LATIMER



County Legislator
ERIKA PIERCE



Assemblymember
CHRIS BURDICK



Mt. Kisco Mayor
GINA PICINICH

COFFEE & CONVERSATION

SATURDAY

June 3, 2023

1-2 p.m.

**Mt. Kisco Public Library
Community Room
100 East Main Street**

For more information,
call (914) 995-2804.



Westchester
gov.com



A Farewell (and Thank You!) to Danny

Finally, last Wednesday, May 10, was our Albany intern Danny Sheehy's last day working with us. Danny, who traveled all the way from County Kerry in Ireland to do an internship with the NYS Assembly, did an exceptional job - never shrinking from any assignment, no matter how complex, always carrying it out diligently and with an incredibly positive attitude. It has been an absolute pleasure to have him in our office these last five months. We have gotten to know him as the warm and wonderful person he is, and we will all miss him very much.

(And congratulations to him for winning the Distinguished Intern Award for his internship program research paper... no surprise to any of us!)



As always, **please do not hesitate to reach out to my office with any questions or if there is any assistance we can provide.** You can always reach me at burdickc@nyassembly.gov or by calling (914) 244-4450. My staff and I are always ready to help. Please also follow me on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) for continued up-to-date information.

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

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature of Chris Burdick in cursive.

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