



NEWS *From* Assemblymember John T. McDonald III



Fall 2023

2023 Constituent Survey

Dear Neighbor:

Each year, I send a constituent survey asking for input on potential priorities for the NYS Legislature in the upcoming session, bills that may be considered, and feedback on the issues that are important to you. My job as a public servant is to serve and represent the interests of the 108th District. I pride myself on responsiveness, and I work with my office to assist constituents with navigating state agencies and cutting through red tape.

As always, my office is always available to assist in any way we can. If you are looking for assistance regarding state or local government issues, please do not hesitate to contact me by calling (518) 455-4474 or by emailing mcdonaldj@nyassembly.gov. Something that many people know about me is that I do read and respond to my own emails. To stay updated on community and legislative updates, please join my mailing list by visiting my New York Assembly website at <http://nyassembly.gov/mem/John-T-McDonald-III/>.

I encourage you to reach out to me whether to provide feedback on issues, share any ideas you may have, or discuss a problem that needs to be tackled. I am always willing to meet with constituents in my office, out in the district, by phone or virtually through Zoom. Hearing your voice and what matters to you is extremely beneficial as we shape our legislative agenda and prioritize the needs of the district. It is a privilege to serve you, and it is an honor that I will never take for granted. Thank you for completing the enclosed survey, my door is always open and I look forward to talking to you soon.

Sincerely,

John T. McDonald III, RPh

2023 108th District Constituent Survey

Please find a constituent survey below that will allow you to provide input on the issues that may come up during the next legislative session. These questions are meant to gauge your opinion on areas that are likely to arise or have been discussed during previous legislative sessions; however, note that these questions are not necessarily indicative of the policy issues that I am focusing on or legislation that I am seeking to advance. For many of the questions, especially on the more controversial issues, I ask for the reasoning behind the answer. Understanding the basis for the responses is incredibly helpful to me when considering pending legislation, and I appreciate the thought and time my constituents take when answering these questions.

Your survey responses help guide my work as your representative in the New York State Assembly. I look forward to receiving your input since I rely on it when voting on measures, sponsoring and supporting legislation, and prioritizing funding in the budget process. Please note that there are two spaces available to allow two members of your household to participate.

There are two ways that you can submit the survey:

- By returning the enclosed survey by mail to our Albany office located at the following address:
Assemblymember John T. McDonald III • Room 625, Legislative Office Building, Albany, New York 12248
 - By filling out the form online on my website at <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/John-T-McDonald-III/>
- **The survey deadline for responses is December 31, 2023** •

**Survey questions have a “Yes” or “No” answer choice:
(select one) and some will have a blank line to write in a number or comment.**

1. As we continue to see the impacts of climate change, discussions have been ongoing as to what the next steps are beyond the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (“CLCPA”) that was enacted into law in 2019 and how to fund the objectives of the law. There are multiple bills proposed that would implement a polluter fee structure for carbon and greenhouse gas emissions among other provisions. The fees would be split toward funding for community-based organizations located in or serving environmental justice communities, funding renewable energy projects, and funding energy rebates for low- and moderate-income New Yorkers. In addition, a percentage of funds are committed toward offsetting the loss of fossil fuel-related jobs and revenues. Concerns have been raised by some as to whether costs will be passed down to consumers (the bills do not require nor specify this), questions around the rebates for low- to moderate-income ratepayers, and general questions as to how the legislation will be implemented in practice including labor provisions in the bill. Understanding that it is not possible to explain the various components of complicated bills, what approach do you think is best to help meet the goals of the CLCPA as well as shift our energy source from fossil fuel to renewable energy?

Continued on next page

- a. Move as fast as we can while putting aside cost or reliability concerns
- b. Move strategically while prioritizing reliable supply and affordability keeping in mind that it may take more time
- c. Do nothing and ignore the CLCPA

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- b. Move strategically while prioritizing reliable supply and affordability keeping in mind that it may take more time
- c. Do nothing and ignore the CLCPA

Why? _____ Why? _____

2. The Extended Producer Responsibility Act (A.5322-A) (“EPR”) is a proposed environmental bill that would require producers (person or companies that create the products) of consumer packaging and paper products to pay to recycle these materials. Producers are prohibited from selling or distributing any covered materials in New York unless they have an approved producer responsibility plan. The program will also create a funding mechanism to cover the costs of the program or cover the cost of a municipality for partaking in the program. The funding program will be structured in a way that includes incentives to reward producers for product design that reduce waste, increases the recyclability of the product, and removes toxics in packaging. Charges will also be adjusted based on the post-consumer recycled content rate of the covered material. Are you familiar with the EPR legislation? Do you support or oppose passing the EPR into law? Why?

- a. Yes, I am familiar with the EPR legislation
- b. No, I have not heard of the EPR legislation
- c. Support
- d. Oppose

- a. Yes, I am familiar with the EPR legislation
- b. No, I have not heard of the EPR legislation
- c. Support
- d. Oppose

Why? _____ Why? _____

3. Expanded bottle bill. There is a proposal for a bill (A.6353) that would expand the type of beverages eligible for a deposit and redemption under the current Bottle Bill and raise the deposit refund value to ten cents. Do you support passing an expanded bottle bill into law?

- a. Yes
- b. No

- a. Yes
- b. No

Why? _____ Why? _____

4. The New York Medical Aid in Dying Act would allow a mentally competent, terminally ill patient to choose to self-administer medication to end his or her life with additional protective measures in place. Do you support passing the Medical Aid in Dying Act into law?

- a. Yes
- b. No

- a. Yes
- b. No

Why? _____ Why? _____

5. There is a bill proposed that is referred to as “Fair and Timely Parole.” This bill A.162 (Weprin) would require the board to release people to community supervision when their minimum period of incarceration has been served unless there is a clearly articulated current public safety reason to keep them in prison. On subsequent board appearances, there would be a presumption of release unless the board determines by a preponderance of evidence that an inmate is unlikely to avoid violating the law and that his or her release poses an unreasonable public safety risk. Do you support passing Fair and Timely Parole into law?

- a. Yes
- b. No

- a. Yes
- b. No

Why? _____ Why? _____

6. The Raise the Age (RTA) law changed the age that a child can be prosecuted as an adult to 18 years of age in criminal cases in New York State. Prior to RTA, New York was one of two remaining states to hold 16-year-olds criminally responsible. There are some who have called for changes to the RTA law due to some ambiguity and the shift in these cases to Family Courts, which has led to youth cases being prosecuted in Family Court, where the individual is often released to their family instead of incarceration. In some instances, they are retained in a youth facility while awaiting court appointments.

Do you support changing the Raise the Age law?

- a. Yes
- b. No

- a. Yes
- b. No

What changes do you support?

What changes do you support?

7. There are groups who are advocating for and legislation that would allow early release of all elderly New York inmates, irrespective of the nature of the crime that they were convicted of, who are 55 years of age and older out of prisons and onto early parole. Do you support allowing the parole board to evaluate all inmates who are 55 years old and older for early release from prisons? Note: the proposed bill does not mandate release but allows the Board of Parole to make the evaluations and the discretion to make the decisions.

- a. Yes
- b. No

- a. Yes
- b. No

Why? _____ Why? _____

8. Migrants and asylum seekers are currently unable to seek expedited work authorizations from the federal government. An asylum seeker is someone who is seeking protection from danger in his or her home country. Asylum seekers cannot apply for protection until they arrive in the United States. Crossing an international border for asylum is not illegal and the asylum process can take years to complete. Allowing expedited work permits would allow asylum seekers to address some of the workforce challenges that businesses in NYS are facing, move them out of migrant shelters, and they would pay NYS taxes. There is a bill in NYS that proposes a temporary state work permit system, even though the authority to grant the permits is considered a federal authority. Do you support NYS legislation to allow asylum seekers to work in New York State?

- a. Yes
- b. No

- a. Yes
- b. No

Why? _____ Why? _____

9. Five states plus Washington D.C. provide health coverage to income-eligible adults regardless of immigration status as of July 2023. Do you think that asylum seekers in New York should be eligible for health benefits?

- a. Yes
- b. No

- a. Yes
- b. No

Why? _____ Why? _____

10. There has been discussion around economic development spending and how we can improve how the state invests in funding projects and targeting incentives. Which of the following proposals, if any, do you support as economic development spending reforms?

- a. The elimination of Local Development Corporations and empowering Industrial Development Agencies with the authority to give grants and loans
- b. Tax credits applied to taxes due
- c. Grants
- d. Increased transparency measures
- e. A unified economic development budget
- f. None

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- b. Tax credits applied to taxes due
- c. Grants
- d. Increased transparency measures
- e. A unified economic development budget
- f. None

Other _____

Other _____

11. Gig economy workers are generally treated as independent contractors because of the nature of the work and services provided. Should gig employees be classified as independent contractors or as employees?

- a. Independent Contractors
- b. Employees

- a. Independent Contractors
- b. Employees

Why? _____

Why? _____

12. The burden of student loan debt has a profound impact on the economy and not only impacts the financial decisions of the student borrowers but also the parents and guardians who may assist in financing higher education. Which, if any, of the following do you believe would be the most beneficial in addressing the student loan crisis?

- a. Tax credits to parents and borrowers
- b. Low interest loans
- c. Expanded loan forgiveness programs
- d. Better refinancing options
- e. Government subsidies for education
- f. Increased consumer protections for borrowers

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g. Other _____

g. Other _____

13. A current bill (A.7897 Paulin) proposing a single payer healthcare system in New York is pending in the NYS Legislature. The legislation proposes to pay for the program through a progressive payroll tax for individuals and business. There would also be a graduated tax on income: Those with taxable incomes of \$50,000 or less would be exempt if enrolled in Medicare, those with taxable incomes of \$25,000 or less would be exempt overall. Taxes would be scaled up as enrollment grows. The federal government would need to grant a waiver to use federal funds for a single payer plan as well, which makes a program contingent on the waiver being granted. Do you support a single payer (Medicare-for-all) healthcare system?

- a. Yes
- b. No

- a. Yes
- b. No

What is your reason for supporting or not supporting single payer? _____

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14. Many families struggle to find affordable and reliable child care, and child care centers struggle to retain staff due to salary constraints. What do you think would be helpful to address the current child care crisis?

15. Vacation rental websites, such as Airbnb, HomeAway, and VRBO, are online marketplaces that enable home-sharing. Provided that they are required to pay all related taxes and are compliant with current building codes, would you support these types of businesses in New York?

- a. Yes
- b. No

- a. Yes
- b. No

16. Despite additional charges of corruption in politics, there has been little progress in the way of meaningful ethics reform. What in your opinion is the most important ethics reform measure that New York should enact? Please rank from most important (1) to least important (5)

- a. Enhanced disclosure requirements _____
- b. Pension forfeiture _____
- c. Per diem reform _____
- d. Campaign finance reforms (i.e. Lower limits for political contributions) _____
- e. Other _____

- a. Enhanced disclosure requirements _____
- b. Pension forfeiture _____
- c. Per diem reform _____
- d. Campaign finance reforms (i.e. Lower limits for political contributions) _____
- e. Other _____

17. Term Length - Currently, New York State legislators are elected to a two-year term.

(a) Do you support legislators continuing to serve two-year terms (every two years having to run for re-election)?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

- i. Yes
- ii. No

(b) If you answered no to (a), would you support a constitutional amendment that would increase the length of a term to four years?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

- i. Yes
- ii. No

18. Term Limits – Currently New York State legislators are not subject to term limits, which means they can run for an unlimited number of two-year terms.

(a) Should legislators be subject to term limits?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

- i. Yes
- ii. No

(b) If you answered yes to (a), how many total years of service should a legislator be limited to (choose one response)?

- i. 4
- ii. 8
- iii. 12

- i. 4
- ii. 8
- iii. 12

19. When considering how to allocate the State's financial resources, which categories are your highest priorities? (rank highest priority as 1 – lowest priority as 13)

- a. Education (K-12) _____
- b. Higher Education/College _____
- c. Housing _____
- d. Health Care/Opioid/Heroin _____
- e. Environment _____
- f. Local Governments/Property Tax Relief _____
- g. Bridge and Road Infrastructure _____
- h. Water and Sewer Infrastructure _____
- i. Parks _____

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- g. Bridge and Road Infrastructure _____
- h. Water and Sewer Infrastructure _____
- i. Parks _____

- j. Workforce Development (Trades, Apprenticeships, Nursing, etc.) _____
- k. Resources for the Aging Community _____
- l. Nutrition and Healthy Food _____
- m. Child care _____

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- k. Resources for the Aging Community _____
- l. Nutrition and Healthy Food _____
- m. Child care _____

20. Supporting small businesses is a priority of mine, and I frequently hear about the need for regulatory reforms to remove onerous burdens on small businesses to allow them to grow and succeed. What do you think is the biggest impediment for small businesses?
- | | |
|--|--|
| a. The need for increased communication from regulatory agencies _____ | a. The need for increased communication from regulatory agencies _____ |
| b. Health care costs _____ | b. Health care costs _____ |
| c. Simplifying the tax code _____ | c. Simplifying the tax code _____ |
| d. Licensing requirements _____ | d. Licensing requirements _____ |
| e. Lower tax rates _____ | e. Lower tax rates _____ |
| f. Other (please explain) _____ | f. Other (please explain) _____ |

21. The unfortunate reality of the heroin epidemic is that many of us have been touched by it in some shape or form. What obstacles do you see in prevention, treatment, and recovery? What, if any, thoughts do you have on how we can be more effective in battling this growing problem?

22. Just over 90% of patients continued to receive prescription opioids after an overdose. More than half receive the prescription from the same doctor who prescribed the drugs that led to the overdose. If you are prescribed opioids, do you think a health care professional should be notified if you have had a drug overdose on opioids or heroin or that such information should be placed on a registry available to health care providers before she/he prescribes additional opioids?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | a. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| b. <input type="checkbox"/> No | b. <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Why? _____ | Why? _____ |

23. Overdose Prevention Centers (OPCs) have been proposed as a method of preventing deaths from overdoses. The sites provide a clean and safe environment and prevent overdoses by having immediate access to life-saving resources. Individuals can use pre-obtained drugs under the supervision of medical professionals. Staff members of these programs will provide sterile injection supplies, collect used hypodermic needles and syringes, and teach patients about safe consumption practices. Patients will also be able to access referrals to treatment, job training, and other social services. Would you support safe injection sites that allow supervised drug use?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | a. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| b. <input type="checkbox"/> No | b. <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Why? _____ | Why? _____ |

24. Please share any thoughts on what issues are important to you that you would like to see addressed in the 2024 session

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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Assemblymember

John T. McDonald III

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