

Hi,

I hope you and your loved ones could safely get together to celebrate Thanksgiving. As we head into the holiday season, I wanted to share with you what I have been up to over the past month as well as highlight some legislative accomplishments and helpful resources. Several bills I co-sponsored and helped pass were recently signed into law. These pieces of legislation will make it easier for New Yorkers to own electric vehicles, promote housing stability, expand access to prenatal tests, protect our children, and help disabled veterans who own a business. I've also included some helpful resources for residents struggling to keep their homes warm this winter and small businesses burdened with pandemic-related expenses.

If you have questions or concerns about any community issue, please don't hesitate to contact my office at 518-377-0902 or [SteckP@nyassembly.gov](mailto:SteckP@nyassembly.gov).

All the best,  
Phil Steck

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## ***Legislative Updates***

### **The Electric Vehicle Rights Act**

The Electric Vehicle Rights Act, a bill I co-sponsored, was signed into law to prevent homeowners' associations from adopting rules that prohibit or impose unreasonable limitations on the installation or use of electric vehicle charging stations (Ch. 627 of 2022). While a homeowners' association can still have a voice in the installation process, they cannot make it overly costly to complete. Getting more New Yorkers to drive electric vehicles is vital for the state to meet emissions goals set by the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

Without a robust charging station network, many consumers won't view electric vehicles as realistic alternatives to gas-powered vehicles.

### **Protections Against Housing Instability from Medical Debts**

Another law I co-sponsored and helped pass prohibits a lien on a person's primary residence or wage garnishment for medical debt judgments (Ch. 648 of 2022). Around [8%](#) of New Yorkers have delinquent medical debt, which is strongly associated with housing instability and even homelessness. This law will promote housing stability by prohibiting nonprofit hospitals and health care providers from imposing these liens.

### **Access to Prenatal Tests**

To expand access to important prenatal tests, I helped pass a law that eliminates an unnecessary age restriction on non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT) for Medicaid patients (Ch. 650 of 2022). Under previous law, only Medicaid patients who were 30 years and older had access to this testing. This law will bring New York's Medicaid coverage in line with other insurance practices and allow all expecting mothers to test for Down syndrome.

### **Protecting Our Children**

I am extremely proud to have passed a law to ensure public and private child advocacy centers (CACs) can run background checks using the State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) for current and prospective employees (Ch. 611 of 2022). Child victims of sexual and other serious physical abuse are supported at CACs, so properly vetting its employees is crucial to protect these children. In addition to this crucial law, I was vital in the passing of a law that redefines sexual abuse in the third degree to address inconsistencies in criminal law and implement stricter penalties for crimes committed against minors (Ch. 647 of 2022).

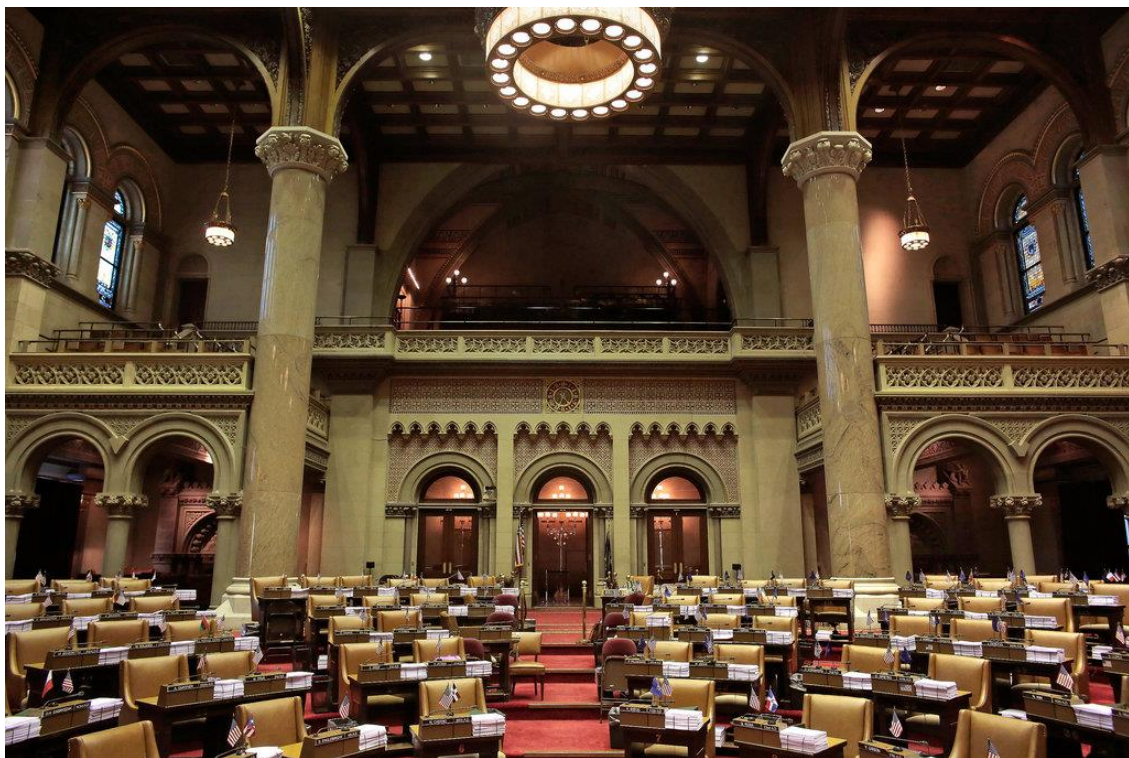
### **Supporting Employees**

Workers should never be punished or disciplined by employers for lawful absences. That's why I strongly supported a law to clarify that employees have the

right to take legally protected time off from their jobs to address certain medical, caregiving and religious needs without penalty (Ch. 604 of 2022).

### **Gratitude & Assistance for Our Veterans**

Our veterans deserve our eternal gratitude for their service to our nation. It is essential we show this gratitude by offering them every tool we can so they can be successful business owners. I worked with my colleagues to pass a law that allows service-disabled veteran business owners to apply for the Excelsior Linked Deposit Program (Ch. 587 of 2022), which helps existing businesses secure loans with reduced interest rates. Providing service-disabled veteran business owners with this financial lifeline helps further support these entrepreneurs during difficult times.



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## ***In the Community***

### **Combating Climate Change**

I spoke at the New York Renews rally to encourage my fellow lawmakers to prioritize several bills in the NY Renews' Climate, Jobs and Justice Package. These measures are crucial to supporting the state's transition to a green economy, protecting air and water and creating good-paying jobs.



### **Small Business Saturday**

I kicked off the holiday season by visiting local businesses in Schenectady as part of Small Business Saturday. Small businesses are the heart of our communities and are vital to the state's economy. One local business that truly exemplifies my mission of making our planet more sustainable is Livingston Energy Group. Founders Jason Zarillo (left) and Schuyler Poukish (right) invited me to visit their headquarters in Schenectady to learn about their latest electric vehicle charging prototype and new software development space. I'm thrilled to see the amazing advancements they are making right in our backyards.



## Menands Holiday Luncheon and Tree Lighting Ceremony

This past week, it was great to see so many of my neighbors and local officials at the Menands Holiday Luncheon and Tree Lighting Ceremony. And a very special thank you to our Village Clerk Don Handerhan for rocking the red suit for all the kids.



## **Visit to Colonie Central High School**

Understanding how our judicial system works is important for everyone, even if you never step foot into a courtroom. I visited Colonie Central High School to discuss our courts with students in civic classes. With my experience in civil rights and employment law, I was happy to share my insights with students on our court system.



## **Supporting those with Disabilities**

I met with Living Resources staff to discuss how we can work together to support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Living Resources provides a range of services to nearly 2,000 families and individuals, helping those with disabilities reach new levels of independence and personal growth. I'll continue fighting to provide resources to these integral community organizations that make a difference in the lives of those with disabilities.



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## ***Tips & Information***

### **Work Opportunity Tax Credit**

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit available to employers for employing individuals from certain targeted groups who have faced significant barriers to employment, including veterans and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients. For more information on WOTC, visit the [U.S. Department of Labor website](#) or the [IRS website](#).

### **Capital Costs Tax Credit Program**

The COVID-19 Capital Costs Tax Credit Program provides financial assistance to small businesses burdened with various pandemic-related costs, from building upgrades to health-related supplies and equipment. For more information about the program, [click here](#).

### **Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)**

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) can help eligible New Yorkers keep their homes warm this winter. Eligibility and benefit amounts are based on income, household size, the primary heating source and the presence of a household member aged 60 or older or permanently disabled. Those in danger of running out of fuel or having their utility service shut off may also be eligible for emergency HEAP benefits. Call 1-800-342-3009 or [click here](#) to see if you're eligible for heating assistance.