



Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo 2017 CONSTITUENT SURVEY RESULTS

- 1) *Do you support a plan to offer free tuition to SUNY and CUNY schools for New York State residents whose families earn less than \$125,000? This proposal would not cover part-time students, room and board, and other fees associated with enrollment at these colleges.*

Yes – 41.8%

No – 45%

Undecided – 11.2%

The final budget did include a version of the Governor's proposed Excelsior Scholarship program. This scholarship covers the remaining cost of tuition for in-state students at SUNY and CUNY schools that is not covered by the current Tuition Assistance Program and federal tuition assistance and is capped at \$5,500. Many people who responded to the survey wanted this proposal to include certain requirements for students utilizing this program. The Assembly helped secure language that creates requirements for the Excelsior Scholarship. These include a minimum Grade Point Average and maintaining residency after graduation. The scholarship becomes a no interest loan that must be paid back for students who do not stay in New York. We were also able to include funding for scholarships for students attending private schools as well as tuition assistance for part-time students at community colleges.

- 2) *Do you support an expansion of the Millionaire's Tax to help balance the state budget?*

Yes – 65.4%

No – 23.1%

Undecided – 9.4%

To ensure New York's wealthiest continue to pay their fair share, the 2017-18 budget extends the state millionaire's tax for two years. It was set to expire at the end of this year. Revenue from the tax is crucial to funding important programs and services throughout the state, including public education and infrastructure improvements. Although arguments have been made that the Millionaire's Tax encourages the wealthy to pack up and move out of state, the opposite has been true. The number of New York millionaires has increased by 63 percent since 2009, when the tax was first implemented. An effort to expand the millionaires' tax was defeated, although that will need to be revisited if deep budget cuts from Washington are enacted.

- 3) *Do you support voting reforms such as allowing for early voting, automatic and same day registration, and consolidating primaries to a single day?*

Yes – 59.1%

No – 29.4%

Undecided – 9.3%

While no voting reforms were included as part of the 2017-18 State Budget, the Assembly has advocated for measures that increase voter participation for many years. These include consolidating primaries to a single date in June, allowing for automatic registration, permitting early voting, and updating polling sites and voter registration information. Each year voter turnout is a fraction of the number of people registered. It's important that we do what we can to make registering and voting as convenient as possible. I, along with many of my colleagues, sponsor legislation that would implement these changes, but we'll need support from our partners in state government to make them a reality.

- 4) *Currently, New York and North Carolina are the only two states that treat 16- and 17-year-olds as adults in the criminal justice system. Do you support raising the age of criminal responsibility to 18-years-old for non-violent offenders?*

Yes – 61.6%

No – 30.7%

Undecided – 6.4%

NYS is only one of two states that still treats 16- and 17-year-old as adults in all criminal justice proceedings. The final budget included a measure to raise the age of criminal responsibility for **non-violent offenders** from 16 to 18 years old. This will keep young people out of often dangerous prisons and will also reduce recidivism rates. Beginning Oct. 1, 2018, the new law prohibits imprisoning young people under the age of 17 in county jails. Beginning Oct. 1, 2019, this applies to young people under the age of 18. When pretrial detention is necessary, they will be held in local youth detention facilities certified by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). Young people age 16 or 17 charged and convicted as adults for serious crimes and sentenced to incarceration will be held in a youth-only facility operated by the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) with special programming and services provided by OCFS. The new state budget provides \$4.6 million in funding for local detention centers statewide to fund necessary upgrades.

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5) ***Do you support the Reproductive Health Act, updating New York’s laws which currently predate Roe vs. Wade?***

Yes – 48.8%

No – 21%

Undecided – 25.2%

In 1970, New York State passed legislation protecting a woman’s right to choose. That law became part of the NY Criminal Code where it remains today. In 1973, the Supreme Court issued its Roe vs. Wade decision, affording this right for all women at the federal level. In the decades since that decision, other court cases have been decided which clarify the scope of Roe vs. Wade. The Reproductive Health Act would essentially update New York’s law to match federal law. The biggest change would be to move these matters from the Criminal Code section of NY law to the Health Code. A majority of the Assembly and the Governor would like to see this change occur.

6) ***Do you support the creation of a single-payer health care system in New York State? Single payer health care is a universal health care system where a “single payer” fund, rather than private insurers, pays for health care costs.***

Yes – 43.3%

No – 31.3%

Undecided – 22.7%

As health care, and uncertainties about its future, continue to dominate national policy conversations, more attention is being brought to the creation of a single-payer system, or universal health care system in NYS. This system would create one government-run organization to collect health care fees and payout costs to providers. Currently there are thousands of private insurers, HMOs, billing agencies, etc. that overlap to provide coverage, collect fees, and issue payments. A single-payer system could significantly cut red tape and costs associated with the current health care system. There are obviously many questions that still remain on how this would be implemented, how much it would cost, and its impact on patients and providers, but it is certainly worth exploring. The Assembly majority has supported a bill to create such a system in New York, but it faces an uphill battle.

7) ***Do you support a statewide ban on plastic carryout bags?***

Yes – 45.5%

No – 39.5%

Undecided – 13.2%

In February, the Governor signed a bill that delayed New York City from enacting a local law that would have charged a five-cent fee on plastic carryout bags. These are the type of bags that are traditionally used at grocery stores and restaurants. After the bill was signed, the Governor announced the creation of a Task Force to examine the environmental effects of plastics bags and develop a statewide plan to address the issue. While these bags are harmful to the environment, many New York residents rely on them as a convenient way to carry groceries and other items. If a plastic bag ban is imposed, there must be viable and affordable option to replace these bags. I will be following this issue closely.

8) ***What do you think the Legislature’s top priority should be in 2017?***

Many respondents to this year’s survey shared similar thoughts on what the Legislature should focus on this year. As in past years, continued work to improve the local economy, lower taxes, and ethics were popular responses. The Legislature is continuing to look at ways to assist business in New York, such as reforming the workers’ compensation system and expanding ride sharing to Upstate as we did in this year’s budget. To provide tax relief, the budget included funding of the STAR program and avoided a cap on savings, as well as provides another round of property tax rebates. With regards to ethics, the Legislature passed a bill in January that would strip pensions from public officials that are convicted of a felony; this measure will need final approval by voters before it can take effect. I’ve worked with many of my Assembly colleagues for years to pass bills that limit legislators’ outside income, close the LLC Loophole, increase transparency on lobbyists, and reform campaign finance laws. Health care was another common priority among respondents to this year’s survey. With uncertainty surrounding health care at the federal level, the state is examining ways to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to quality, affordable health care. This should be a right, not a privilege, for all citizens.

