



# Assemblymember **WILLIAM CONRAD**

## **END OF SESSION 2021**

Dear Neighbors,

*I hope this newsletter finds you well. I wanted to share with you some of the 140th Assembly District's legislative and community highlights from the first half of 2021. It has been a busy time for all of us as we emerge from the pandemic and begin our collective recovery, economically and emotionally. And I have spent these past months getting up to speed in my new role as your Assembly representative, learning more every day about how best to serve you.*

*I hear from constituents all the time, about the things that are most important to you. Please know, I value every call, email, letter, and visit because these interactions are my most trusted guide. In other words, your faithful input tells me where I ought to be focusing my attention and energy. I don't always have immediate answers for your most pressing questions, or simple solutions to your most chronic challenges – but I have and will always do my best to address them in a timely and useful way. Sometimes I wish for more urgency from government, and I must remind myself that in our representative democracy, my voice is one among many.*

*There is one thing I never forget, though: that I am here to fight for you, and for the demands of our district. One anecdote that comes to mind involves the pandemic-related visitation bans that were put in place last year at nursing homes across the State. A district resident reached out to me just as the Assembly was about to take up a bill regarding ban exemptions for designated essential caregivers. Her husband is a nursing home resident, and pre-pandemic, she was at his side every day. She bathed him, brushed his teeth, and checked on his overall wellness. When her visits stopped, she told me, his condition began to decline. Months into the ban, he had lost weight and become more withdrawn and confused. She was panicked.*

*Her story stayed with me. This was a family, one of many, in desperate need of relief – and, I humbly realized, it was within my capabilities to help deliver it. Before long, I got to tell her that the “essential caregiver” bill had passed both houses. I then joined my colleagues in keeping up pressure on the Governor to sign it into law, which he did. Her reaction – one of gratitude and excitement – touched me deeply, just as her initial story had. She had done the hardest work, and she and her husband had endured great sacrifice and suffering. I owed her my gratitude, not the other way around.*

*My point is, you the residents of the 140th are the reason I felt compelled to elected service. I am tremendously honored, whenever one of you reaches out to share a need, or lend support to a cause, or express your hopes for our district. My voice may be one among many, but it belongs to all of you.*

*So please, keep in touch. I update my Facebook (@NYSAssemblyWilliamConrad) and Twitter (@140thBill) pages throughout each day, and you can find details on legislative matters at my Assembly website, [nyassembly.gov/mem/William-Conrad](https://nyassembly.gov/mem/William-Conrad). My email address is [conradw@nyassembly.gov](mailto:conradw@nyassembly.gov).*

*For those who prefer more traditional means of communication, my office phone number is (716) 873-2540. Its address is 34 Pequet Parkway, off Fillmore Avenue in the City of Tonawanda, 14150. And I will have another newsletter out at the end of the year.*

*Until we speak again, I wish you good health and much happiness.*

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William C. Conrad". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Bill Conrad



# BUDGETING & LAWMAKING



**JANUARY 11, 2021** – I was thrilled to be introduced on the Assembly floor shortly after the start of the 2021 legislative session. Due to the pandemic, much of the Legislature's work over the previous year had to take place via remote access. Still, I tried to make frequent trips to Albany, as in-person interactions with my colleagues proved especially helpful to me as a freshman lawmaker. This moment on Jan. 11 was made even more special by the company of my wife Mary Kate and our young children, Emma, Liam, Katie, and Molly.



**MAY 7, 2021** – I, along with State Sen. Sean Ryan, announced on May 7 our bill to allow the relocation of Amigone Funeral Home's Sheridan Park Crematory to a non-residential area in the Town of Tonawanda.

We were joined by Tonawanda Councilwoman Shannon Patch and residents of Werkley Road, which is adjacent to the crematory. A 1998 State law has prevented combination funeral home-crematories like Amigone's from moving while remaining intact. Our bill, which was one of 892 bills that passed both houses this session, will permit such a move, and grant the town considerable say in where the business will go.

Werkley residents have long complained of nuisance emissions and odors from the stack, and the crematory was ordered by the State Department of Environmental Conservation to temporarily cease operations as recently as last September, after a thick black smoke was seen pouring from the facility's chimney.

The hope now is that Amigone will work with town officials to begin the moving process.

## BUDGET: About the 2021-22 New York State Spending Plan

- Aid and Incentives for Municipalities, restored to pre-pandemic levels:
  - City of Buffalo, \$4,032,131
  - City of Tonawanda, \$260,210
  - North Tonawanda, \$117,040
  - Town of Tonawanda, \$117,040
  - Village of Kenmore, \$128,270
- 23% more for the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPs)
- 12% more for schools funding, including a \$1.4 billion increase in Foundation Aid, and a commitment by the State to fully fund Foundation Aid over the next three years:
  - City of Buffalo, \$587.5 million, or \$44 million more in Foundation Aid
  - City of Tonawanda, \$14.2 million, or \$400,000 more
  - Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda, \$41.6 million, or \$1.7 million more
  - North Tonawanda, \$30 million, or \$900,000 more
  - \$105 million more for the expansion of Universal Prekindergarten, with Ken-Ton Schools' announcing in June that, thanks to new State funding, it will begin offering an all-day option for its UPK program
  - A \$500 increase in the maximum Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award
  - No tuition increases for SUNY schools
- \$7 million in funding for libraries, plus \$20 million for library construction grants
- Nearly \$1 billion for the recoveries of small businesses, restaurants, and arts centers
- \$2.4 billion for rental and landlord assistance and \$20 million for the Homeowner Protection Program
- \$3 million for a study on the implementation of universal broadband
- \$5 million for the Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer Support Project

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: Some of the New State Laws That Have Taken Effect Since January 2021

**A.712-A:** Requires all drivers of for-hire vehicles with capacities of nine or more passengers to be subject to drug and alcohol testing

**A.3173-A:** Requires businesses providing automatic renewal offers to provide notice of automatic renewal terms, as well as cost-free means of cancellation

**A.1260:** Creates a Crohn's disease and colitis identification card to grant people suffering from such illnesses access to open public establishments' employee-only restrooms

**A.1249:** Permits the Correctional Association of New York to access and inspect all State correctional facilities with 72 hours' notice

**2021-22 budget:** Establishes a pilot program allowing 12- and 13-year-old licensed hunters to hunt deer

# GOOD NEWS CORNER



**MAY 13, 2021** – ConnectLife, which provides 70% of the blood supply to our region's hospitals, officially opened its mobile donation center in the Ken-Ton Elmwood Commons, formerly the Philip Sheridan school. I was joined at the ribbon-cutting by Tonawanda Town Supervisor Joe Emminger, Town Councilmembers Shannon Patch and Carl Szarek, Ken-Ton Chamber of Commerce President Cathy Piciulo, ConnectLife President Mark Simon and KTEC Development Director John Duerr.



**MARCH 19, 2021** – As the COVID-19 vaccination rollout got off to a slow start across the country, I was eager to work with Buffalo City Councilman Joe Golombek to arrange for a pop-up clinic serving residents of Black Rock/Riverside, an underserved ZIP code that was left off the State's list of priority neighborhoods for early inoculation. Thank you to the Northwest Buffalo Community Center, Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown, and the medical personnel who made it happen.



**MAY 24, 2021** – I was lucky to visit with co-owners of Kenmore business The Laundromutt, Corina Stammworthy and Macie Pisa. The championship duo won the top prize on ABC's "Pooch Perfect!" – a dog-grooming competition that alerted the world to their amazing work.



**APRIL 24, 2021** – I was honored to join in recognizing my esteemed predecessor Robin Schimminger, who was the American Legion Milton J. Brounshidle Post's guest of honor during a luncheon at Amici Ristorante in Kenmore. Pictured with us are Tonawanda Town Supervisor Joe Emminger and former Supervisor Tony Caruana. It was a well-deserved tribute to Robin, who has long been a supporter of our local veterans.

## ...AND MORE!

- Did you know we have GRAMMY winners in our midst? Two of them are Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus second soprano Christina Reece, of the City of Tonawanda, and bass and baritone Mark Struckmann, of Kenmore. In March, the Chorus and the BPO nabbed the coveted award for Best Choral Performance, for their extraordinary rendition of "The Passion of Yeshua."
- Sumitomo Rubber USA is modernizing its century-old plant in the Town of Tonawanda – and the State is partnering with the company on its planned \$122 million expansion. Empire State Development has offered tax credits for Sumitomo's new job creation, and the New York Power Authority has allocated low-cost hydropower to support its continued investment in Western New York and its workforce.
- The State announced in April a \$4 million settlement with American Axle & Manufacturing, which will now compensate New York for costs associated with the State's cleanup of contamination at the old Tonawanda Forge.
- On June 5, the smokestacks at the former Tonawanda Coke were imploded, making way for further remediation of the River Road property. I salute all the community leaders who worked for so long to hold the plant accountable for its environmental crimes. Developer Jon Williams' Riverview Innovation & Technology Campus will usher in a healthier future for this key parcel.

*I hope you'll join us at 7 p.m. August 1 for a free BPO concert in the bandshell at Niawanda Park, as part of the City of Tonawanda summer concert series. I was so pleased this year to secure the State funding for this performance!*

# SCENES FROM THE 140TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



**APRIL 18, 2021** – My son Liam and I kicked off spring-cleaning season in North Tonawanda, joining the Oliver Street Merchants Association and volunteers in tidying up the rail tracks at Oliver and Sommer streets. There was a great turnout of volunteers, who filled many dozens of trash bags with litter and dead leaves.



**APRIL 22, 2021** – It was a pleasure meeting with a visiting New York State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, who got to enjoy the new SPOT Coffee on Webster Street in North Tonawanda. We talked about our respective backgrounds, the 140th District, and his own time in the Assembly.

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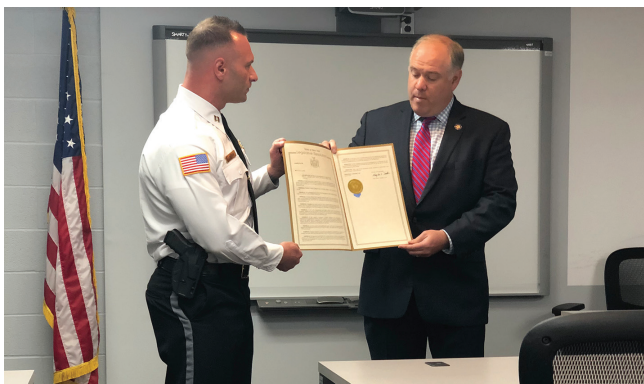
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Assemblymember  
**WILLIAM  
CONRAD**

## END OF SESSION 2021

Summer 2021



**MAY 28, 2021** – I had the distinct honor of presenting to Town of Tonawanda Police Capt. Joe Milosich a copy of resolution K198, which I put forth in April for the Assembly's adoption, in recognition of the life and service of the late Capt. Christine Milosich, TTPD's highly acclaimed Community Services Commander. She was the department's first woman to earn the ranks of lieutenant and captain. Chrissy was also Joe's wife, and a dear friend to so many of us in the town. Her enduring legacy of compassion, her historic record of achievement – they are woven into the fabric of Tonawanda.



**MAY 14, 2021** – I was treated to a tour of the Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum, compliments of Director Ian Seppala and Trustee Rae Proefrock. The Carrousel Museum in North Tonawanda is one of the 140th's finest assets, preserving our history, drawing visitors, and teaching children about the joy and science of the carousel. (My own kids love it there!) The pandemic has been hard on our cultural institutions, and I'm eager to do all I can to support their efforts.