

Want to learn more?

E-mail Mike Norris at norrism@nyassembly.gov to sign up for his newsletter.

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COVID-19 RESOURCES

NYS's Novel Coronavirus Information:

1-888-364-3065
<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>

Niagara County Public Health Information:

(716) 439-7430
www.niagaracounty.com/health/Services/Public-Health-Preparedness/NOVEL-CORONAVIRUS-2019-nCoV

Erie County Public Health Information:

(716) 858-2929
www2.erie.gov/health/index.php?q=coronavirus

Orleans County Public Health Information:

585-589-3278
www.orleanscountyny.gov/publichealth

For Information on the Reopening:

<https://forward.ny.gov/>

NEW YORK STATE'S
NOVEL CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION
HOTLINE 24/7:

1-888-364-3065

WEBSITE:

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>

DEAR NEIGHBORS:

As we all have been doing our part to flatten the curve against the coronavirus, this has been a challenging time for everyone, whether you were staying home or out as an essential worker. But one thing was clear: the strength and resolve of our Western New York communities to rally around each other has never been greater.

I have never been more impressed or inspired by the spirit of our community and outpouring of positive stories of neighbors helping neighbors, and I'd like to thank you all for doing your part.

I would also like to extend a special thank you to our essential and healthcare workers. We appreciate all of you who have continued working around the clock. Thank you so very much.

Inside this newsletter you can learn more about some of the new legislative proposals I put forth and supported during this year's historic Legislative Session. My staff and I also have been working night and day with constituents seeking help — we are here to help however we can, so please do not hesitate to reach out.

Please continue to follow safe social distancing so that we can strengthen our economy, protect our vulnerable and ensure our healthcare system can meet our needs as the pandemic progresses. Stay safe, be well, and know I am working hard for you.

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Assemblyman
MIKE NORRIS

CONTACT ASSEMBLYMAN MIKE NORRIS:

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SUPPORTING OUR LOCAL SMALL BUSINESSES MATTERS!

Our businesses, particularly our small employers, have been struggling for months now. Because of our state's existing difficult business climate and high taxes, it's already hard to get a business off the ground and to keep it running. Every month was already an accomplishment. But the fact that so many of our small businesses have been able to hold on during the shutdown has been remarkable. We must do everything we can to support them.

That's why I've been encouraging the public to support our local businesses and restaurants throughout the pandemic by ordering from them or purchasing gift cards to use later. Now that shops and services have reopened, it's time to support our local small businesses safely again.

SMALL BUSINESSES ARE THE BACKBONE OF OUR ECONOMY

I'm also sponsoring new legislation known as the New York First Act to:

- Provide grants to highlight local services and initiatives in communities across the state including in retail, restaurants, banking, charitable organizations and other services.
- The program will support online marketing, social media, search engine optimization and provide business assistance.
- The goal of the legislation is to bridge the digital divide for our local businesses so that consumers can keep money in the community, create local jobs, enhance customer service, and improve and contribute to their community's quality of life.

As consumers, by choosing local we can directly impact our local economy's ability to succeed. This bill will help more of our local businesses compete in today's global online marketplace.

Additionally, throughout the pandemic I have called for many initiatives to support our economic recovery including:

- Urged the governor to release \$743 million in local infrastructure construction and maintenance project funding.
- Extend or waive certain state regulations made during this State of Emergency for an additional year to help bridge an economic rebound, including allowing the use of telehealth, allowing AV technology for notary services, allowing individuals and businesses to extend their licenses, and waiving earnings limitations for retired public retirees returning to work, among others.
- Suspend fees for occupational licenses for one year following the end of the emergency period.
- Provide businesses and not-for-profits with recovery loans under Empire State Development to assist the 54 percent of our state's workforce employed by our 608,351 small businesses.
- Repurpose any unallocated settlement funding and funding from programs like Regional Economic Development Councils, State and Municipal Facilities, NYS Special Infrastructure, REDCs, NY Works Economic Development Fund, and START-UP NY benefits toward disaster relief for our small businesses.
- Use any unallocated credits under the Film Tax Credit for business relief for non-essential businesses and sole proprietors that do not have access to unemployment benefits.
- Enact the "Small Business Emergency Recovery Act of 2020" (A.10266).
- Increase rural internet accessibility to ensure equality in access to telehealth, remote learning and work-from-home capabilities.
- Increase the CHIPS competitive bid threshold from \$350,000 to \$750,000 and increase competitive bid thresholds for municipalities and school districts for one year.
- Enact Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise reforms to require contractors to hire MWBEs at a rate that correlates with the percentage in their economic development region.
- Align all State Tax Filing dates with Federal Tax Filing Dates.



**HELP
SUPPORT
OUR LOCAL
SMALL
BUSINESSES
EVERY DAY**



HAVING THE BACKS OF **NY'S FARMS**

One of the hardest hit sectors of our economy has been agriculture. With restaurants, schools and other large venues closed for months, the demand for food was lower than normal, despite what many of us experienced in grocery stores. Farmers were forced by federal regulations to dump dairy and other food products and there was a disconnect between farm and table, with both farmers and families suffering. To address this, I called on the state and federal governments to provide relief, but also joined together with likeminded colleagues to put together a plan that would provide immediate relief to farmers across our state during the pandemic:

- Suspend DMV registration requirements for agricultural vehicles and farm trucks for one year;
- Suspend the highway use tax, special hauling permit fees, and collection of New York state tolls for vehicles used to transport agricultural products, including milk;
- Suspend the 24-hour agricultural rest requirement during the state of emergency period;
- Extend the Milk Producers Security Fund to help producers who are unable to sell because of COVID-19;
- Use additional federal stimulus money for direct-cash infusions for Cornell Cooperative Extensions to assist in the provision of emergency services;
- Use federal stimulus funding to invest in rural broadband infrastructure to assist in the provision of services to farms/rural areas during uncertain social and economic times;
- Provide vouchers for food banks to purchase local dairy and agricultural products; and
- Stipulate “green nurseries” as essential businesses for the remainder of the COVID-19 crisis, so that these businesses can re-open while following social-distancing guidelines.

The number one industry in our state has been agriculture, and as we continue modernizing and competing in a global economy, New York State remains a leader in agriculture. Throughout the state, and here in Western New York, farming remains a key industry and employer for our state and we must continue to support and protect this industry. I have been honored to be named to the New York Farm Bureau’s Circle of Friends every year since first taking office, and I also am supporting as a co-sponsor a new package of bills that will help protect, promote and advance farming in our state by:

- Encouraging locally-sourced goods (A.6733);
- Allowing the state Department of Transportation to issue a seasonal agricultural permit for oversized vehicles (A.3700);
- Discounting tolls on the New York State Thruway for farmers transporting agricultural products (A.1265-A);
- Increasing the farm workforce retention credit and extending the effectiveness of the credit (A.8760);
- Clarifying and affirming the rights of farmers who participate in farmland preservation agreements (A.7845-A); and
- Allowing semitrailers to register with agricultural plates (A.9766).



- Allocate for these volunteer companies to be reimbursed for lost revenue due to either municipal budget cuts or the cancellation of public events or fundraisers during this state of emergency.

As your Assemblyman, Mike Norris authored and introduced new legislation to address this called the New York State Volunteer Fire Protection Reimbursement Account (A.10397), which would:

- Allocate existing funds from the public safety communications surcharge in the state's General Fund to reimburse volunteer departments and emergency medical services for expenses incurred to procuring personal protective equipment; and

With costs rising, fire companies have also been unable to hold their annual fundraisers that provide their operating revenue — not to mention the added costs needed to cover the personal protective equipment and other pandemic-related expenses now necessary for every call.

During this extraordinary time, our volunteer fire companies have been there to respond to our emergencies and have taken every precaution to protect us as well as their dedicated volunteer firefighters and EMTs from the coronavirus.

WORKING FOR OUR VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANIES

New York State Assembly
Albany, NY 12248

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ASSEMBLYMAN MIKE NORRIS'

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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ASSEMBLYMAN **MIKE NORRIS**:
WORKING FOR US!

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NORRIS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER