



Assemblyman

# Phil Ramos



Winter 2014

## Community News

Assemblyman Ramos has been busy fighting in Albany for Suffolk county families. Take a look at what he's been working on in the State Capitol and around the district.

## Assembly passes DREAM Act

Ramos calls on Senate to do the same

Assemblyman Phil Ramos has been a strong supporter of the DREAM Act because he believes everyone deserves an opportunity to earn a college degree.

The DREAM Act opens doors and would help make higher education a reality for immigrant youth. The bill (A.2597), which was sponsored by Ramos and passed in the state Assembly, gives immigrant students access to state scholarships and the Tuition Assistance Program. The bill also establishes a private scholarship program called the DREAM Fund, it expands access to the NYS College Tuition (529) Program and it grants access to many state educational assistance programs.

Now that the Assembly has passed the DREAM Act, Assemblyman Ramos is calling on the state Senate to finally act on the bill. "Anyone, regardless of immigration status, deserves an equal chance to obtain a quality education. This is a barrier that must be removed," said Assemblyman Ramos.

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Do you have a problem, question, or concern? Assemblyman Ramos wants to hear from you. Please contact our office at 435-3214 or at [ramosp@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:ramosp@assembly.state.ny.us). You can also stop by our office located at 1010 Suffolk Avenue in Brentwood.

# Ramos to recognize two local heroes

*Sgt. Esposito, Jr. and Corey Swinson to be memorialized in bridge renamings*



Assemblyman Phil Ramos is currently sponsoring legislation in the New York State Assembly that will memorialize two local heroes—Sgt. Michael J. Esposito, Jr. and Corey Swinson—by renaming two local bridges in their honor.

The first bill (A.8765) would designate the Washington Avenue bridge overpass, crossing over the LIE in Brentwood the “Sgt. Michael J. Esposito, Jr. Memorial Bridge.” Sgt. Esposito grew up in Brentwood. He attended Brentwood High School, participated in the Air Force ROTC program, and was a junior police cadet with the Suffolk County Police Department. Michael enlisted in the Armed Forces immediately following high school. Upon completing his term with the U.S. Army in 2001, he reenlisted as a result of 9/11. After only 11 months he was promoted to sergeant. On March 18, 2004, Sgt. Esposito lost his life in the line of fire. His heroism and bravery and selfless dedication to duty represent the finest traditions of the American soldier.

Corey Swinson was known to many in the community as an NFL football star. He was a native son of Bay Shore who made it all the way to the NFL. Swinson attended Hampton University in Virginia where he studied social work and played football. He was drafted by the Miami Dolphins in 1995 and spent that season with the St. Louis Rams as a defensive tackle. After his career in the NFL, Swinson returned to Bay Shore to volunteer and make a difference in the lives of our young people. He coached a youth football league, worked as a security director for the Bay Shore district, and later went on to become the director of school safety and security for Copiague public schools. We lost Corey Swinson on September 10, 2013. In honor of Mr. Swinson, Assemblyman Ramos has introduced bill (A.8753) that would designate the bridge on County Road 13 which crosses over Sunrise Highway in Bay Shore as the “Corey J. Swinson Memorial Bridge” to honor his contributions to our community.

- ***Bill A.8765 would designate the Washington Avenue bridge overpass, crossing over the LIE in Brentwood the “Sgt. Michael J. Esposito, Jr. Memorial Bridge.”***
- ***Bill A.8753 would designate the bridge on County Road 13 which crosses over Sunrise Highway in Bay Shore as the “Corey J. Swinson Memorial Bridge.”***

## Assembly Update

***Find out what Assemblyman Ramos is working on in the state Assembly and in the community by tuning into his weekly television show Assembly Update Friday nights at 8:30 p.m. on Cablevision channel 18.***

## Assemblyman Ramos fighting for school funding

Assemblyman Ramos is committed to providing our children with the quality education they deserve while keeping our property taxes down. He is fighting to ensure that funding for local schools get restored in the state's final budget.

In addition, Assemblyman Ramos is sponsoring a bill (A.8720) that will eliminate the gap elimination adjustment (GEA) and provide schools the full amount of aid generated by all existing budget funding formulas. The GEA has been used to reduce state aid to school districts and has unfairly burdened school districts and taxpayers throughout the state, increasing the dependence on local property taxes and taxpayers to fund our schools.

Finally, Assemblyman Ramos is urging that additional funding be afforded to school districts that disproportionately educate large numbers of newly arrived students. Lost amid the push for education reform is the fact that students with little or no previous education, and who speak a language other than English require more resources to reach an acceptable proficiency. School districts that house large numbers of these students have an additional burden and find it difficult to achieve good results at the same rate as those schools without this obstacle. Additional funding for newly arrived students will help level the playing field and improve the education for countless students new to this country.



*Assemblyman Phil Ramos recently met with members of the Brentwood School Board in Albany to discuss the restoration of school funding for the Brentwood school district.*

## Assemblyman Ramos introduces hate crime bill in Albany

Assemblyman Phil Ramos recently introduced legislation that would stiffen the penalties for hate crimes. Bill A.8609 would add aggravated harassment in the first degree to the list of offenses for which a hate crime categorization would apply.

Currently, a hate crime is committed when someone commits a specific offense—either intentionally selecting their victim or commits a crime because of a belief or perception regarding their victim's race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, religion, religious practice, age, disability, or sexual orientation. In these cases, these crimes are considered hate crimes under the law. A person convicted of such an offense faces harsher criminal penalties.

However, if a person damages a premise primarily used for religious purposes—such as etching, painting, drawing, or otherwise, placing a swastika or noose on the property of another, or setting a cross on fire in public view, with the intent to harass, threaten, or alarm another person because of their race, color, gender, religion, etc., they do not currently face the same punishment under the law. Assemblyman Ramos' bill would amend the penal law to add aggravated harassment in the first degree and stiffen the penalty for those committing these crimes. These crimes are committed for the same spiteful reasons that other hate crimes are committed and should be punishable just the same.

## Around the Community



### Community Leaders in Albany

At the opening of the 2014 legislative session, Assemblyman Ramos invited community leaders from all around his district to join him in Albany to explain the legislative process and show them first hand how to lobby their representatives on issues that are of the utmost importance to them. Leaders from Brentwood, Central Islip and Bay Shore were present.



### Black History Month Celebration

In February, Assemblyman Phil Ramos celebrated his Third Annual Black History Month Celebration. This year, Assemblyman Ramos had the pleasure of honoring Suffolk County Police Officer and Police Athletic League Coordinator Edward Groce; educator and Youth Director for Haitian Americans United For Change Inc. Yanick Frederic; and artist and motivational speaker Shadrack Boakye. Judge William G. Ford served as the evening's keynote speaker.



### Follow Assemblyman Ramos

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### Stony Brook Students Advocate for EOP

Stony Brook students recently came up to Albany to lobby for additional funding for the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). Assemblyman Ramos' commitment to higher education means keeping the well-regarded SUNY system both affordable and available to New York's youth and ensuring that the programs that assist students are well funded in this year's state budget.