



Assemblyman

DAVID I. WEPRIN

Reports to the Community

SPRING 2014

Serving the partial or entire communities of Briarwood, Bellerose, Bellerose Manor, Fresh Meadows, Glen Oaks, Hillcrest, Holliswood, Jamaica Estates, Jamaica Hills, Oakland Gardens, Queens Village, Richmond Hill, South Richmond Hill, and Utopia.

Assemblyman Weprin's Bill of Adoptee Rights

Assemblyman Weprin's adoptee rights bill has been gaining historic support in both the Assembly and the Senate. "The passage of the "Bill of Adoptee Rights" will provide adult adoptees with access to information that a non-adopted person has a legal right to obtain" said Assemblyman Weprin.

In New York, an adoptee cannot access his or her original birth certificate unless the adoptee goes through judicial means, and even then, the outcome does not guarantee that access will be granted. This bill will allow adult adoptees to request and receive a non-certified copy of an original birth certificate and/or a medical history form if available.

Adoptees will be able to gain knowledge of their religious and ethnic heritage; as well as have access to medical information that may be necessary for preventive health care and illnesses that are linked to family history and genetics. A birth parent may seek to protect his or her privacy by completing a contact preference form that would be sent to the adult adoptee upon a request for a non-certified copy of an original birth certificate. The contact preference form provides the birth parent with the option to be contacted by the adoptee, through an intermediary or to not be contacted at all.

This bill, spearheaded by Assemblyman Weprin, has garnered tremendous bi-partisan support in Albany, with over 80 sponsors in the Assembly, and 22 in the Senate. The Assembly bill has passed through the health committee, and is being reviewed by the Assembly Codes Committee.



Assemblyman Weprin is joined by fellow legislators and adoptee rights supporters for a press conference regarding the Bill of Adoptee Rights.



Assemblyman Weprin, standing with Queens County Clerk Audrey Pheffer, Senator Stavisky, and Assemblyman Kim, presents proclamations to Imam Shamsi Ali and Rabbi Marc Schneier for their work in Muslim-Jewish Interfaith relations.

The Phagwah Parade

This district is home to the largest Phagwah celebration in America, and during the parade and surrounding festivities, celebrants paint the streets of Richmond Hill with colorful powders to chase away the winter greys and welcome the spring.



Assemblyman Weprin joins State Senator Joseph Addabbo at the Phagwah Parade in Richmond Hill.

Dear Neighbor,

I hope that this newsletter finds you well. As you know, our district is one of the most culturally, ethnically, and religiously diverse districts in all of New York. The past few months have been full of celebration, between Bangladesh Independence Day, Easter, Holi, Lunar New Year, Passover, and Phagwah.

This legislative session, we passed yet another on-time budget. I have made our district's needs a top priority, with increased investments in education, human services, and job growth.

Also during this session, I was appointed Chair of the Task Force on People with Disabilities, and I will continue to advocate on behalf of New York's most vulnerable. My duty is to help all New Yorkers thrive, and to this end, I have introduced legislation aimed at leveling the playing field for the disabled.

As we move forward during the legislative session, I will continue to fight for our district and the resources we need to ensure our community's success, both now and in the future.

I am always here to address any issues or concerns you may have and please do not hesitate to contact my district office for more information regarding any of the items listed. I look forward to hearing from you all and I wish you well.

Sincerely,



David I. Weprin
Member of Assembly

Invitation to the Open House for our 2nd District Office

Please join Assemblyman David I. Weprin in the Grand Opening of our second, fully staffed District Office. Refreshments served.

Sunday, June 8th, 2014
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

111-12 Atlantic Ave.
#5 Richmond Hill, NY 11419

Please RSVP by:

Phone: 718-805-2381; or

Email: RSVPDavidWeprin@gmail.com

Assemblyman Weprin appointed Chair of the New York State Assembly Taskforce on People with Disabilities



Assemblyman Weprin visits the Association for Neurologically Impaired Brain Injured Children (ANIBIC).

In January, Assemblyman Weprin was appointed Chair of the Task Force on People with Disabilities, in addition to his numerous committee memberships. In this post, the Assemblyman has been fiercely advocating on behalf of people with disabilities by sponsoring important bills in the State Assembly. These bills are designed to correct severe oversights by the state regarding people with disabilities. Some of these bills are:



Assemblyman Weprin, at the Annual Legislative Breakfast of the Queens Council on Developmental Disabilities (QCDD), discusses the dire need for increased funding for direct support professionals, as well as early prevention and treatment for the developmentally disabled all across New York.

VOTER ACCESSIBILITY

Currently, while there are accessible voting machines, there are no absentee ballots in large-print or Braille formats for the visually impaired. To correct this issue, Assemblyman Weprin has sponsored a bill (A8815) which would make absentee ballots available in large-print and Braille, so long as a request is made 30 days prior to the election.

EMERGENCY PREPARATIONS

As disasters and emergencies sometimes visit New York, residents are reminded of how critically important it is that the state provide for the safety of the disabled. In an effort to address this problem, Assemblyman Weprin has sponsored two groundbreaking bills.

The first bill (A8816) would require counties to maintain a confidential registry of residents who may require special assistance in times of emergency. This bill would allow all counties to provide swift and life-saving assistance to those individuals during a disaster.

The second bill (A8817) would require new regulations for establishing and maintaining emergency evacuation plans for high rise buildings, especially including procedures for evacuating individuals with disabilities. Under penalty of law, owners of the high rises would have to create an emergency evacuation plan in accordance to the new regulations and file a copy of the plan with the Department of State.

MOVING FORWARD

As Chair of the Task Force on People with Disabilities, Assemblyman Weprin will continue to fight for extensive accessibility, so that all New Yorkers, regardless of their disabilities, will be able to succeed and positively impact their communities.

DISTRICT OFFICE: 185-06 Union Turnpike, Fresh Meadows, NY 11366 • 718-454-3027

DISTRICT OFFICE: 111-12 Atlantic Ave., #5, Richmond Hill, NY 11419 • 718-805-2381

Email: weprin@assembly.state.ny.us • Website: <http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/David-I-Weprin>

New York State Budget Summary

Assemblyman Weprin and his colleagues in the legislature were able to finalize the 2014-15 budget on time, as he announced the approval of the \$138 billion state budget that provides much-needed tax relief while working to create jobs and ensure a better economic outlook for New York State. The budget also makes a commitment to invest in our kids' education in addition to making needed reforms to Common Core. This is the fourth-in-a-row on-time budget passed by the State legislature.

INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION

The 2014-15 state budget allocates more than \$8.6 billion to New York City schools, an increase of over \$435 million from last year. The budget also dedicates \$300 million per year for two years for Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) in New York City.

The budget also includes a \$2 billion "Smart Schools" initiative that voters will consider, which would provide for long-term capital investments in schools. Schools throughout Queens and the state that utilize trailers would be able to replace them over time with permanent class space.

For students pursuing college degrees, the state budget helps grow our higher education system by providing \$10.4 billion for SUNY and \$4.3 billion for CUNY. This year's budget also helps students and parents by increasing funding for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) for the first time in 14 years and restores funding for other college opportunity programs.

REDUCING THE TAX BURDEN

The budget offers tax relief for New York City residents by providing \$85 million in tax credits for homeowners, condominium and co-op owners and renters by implementing a "circuit breaker" plan. The "circuit breaker" will run for 2 years and will factor in household income for the property tax break.

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES AND CREATING JOBS

The budget also includes \$1 million to support the Minority- and Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Development Lending Program, a \$365,000 increase from the executive budget proposal. A new MWBE Investment Fund is also included within the lending program. The fund would provide critical financial support to foster the development of new and emerging ideas and promote the long-term financial performance and success of early-stage MWBEs.

Furthermore, the budget expands the NY Youth Works Program, which encourages businesses to hire unemployed, disadvantaged youth, ages 16 to 24, by connecting it to community colleges.

IMPROVING CHILD CARE AND HUMAN SERVICES

The state budget includes \$13 million to support 2 percent salary increases for direct care workers, including those caring for the disabled at nonprofits licensed by the state. The first Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) will take place on Jan. 1, 2015, and the second increase will go into effect on April 1, 2015.

The 2014-15 state budget provides funding to increase access to quality, affordable child care. The provisions include millions of dollars for additional subsidized child care and requiring strict reporting rules for child care providers.



Governor Cuomo and Assemblyman Weprin celebrate another responsible, on-time budget.



Assemblyman Weprin greets United States Ambassador to Bangladesh, the Honorable Dan Mozena.

Assemblyman Weprin's Religious Garb Bill passes in the Assembly

Assemblyman Weprin has sponsored legislation that would allow New Yorkers to wear religious dress in the workplace without fear of discrimination. The bill passed in the New York State Assembly 133-1. Freedom of religion is fundamentally American, and employers in New York must respect the religious diversity of its residents.

In response to growing concerns of religious communities regarding workplace discrimination due to religious dress and facial grooming, Assemblyman Weprin spearheaded this bill in the Assembly, while Senator James Sanders has introduced the Senate counterpart bill.

Regarding the religious garb bill, Assemblyman Weprin stated, "People should not have to make a choice between working to provide for their families or observing their religion. I'm very proud that we passed this bill in the Assembly and I urge my colleagues to support the passing of the legislation in the Senate to ensure that all New Yorkers will be able to freely wear religious garments in the workplace such as hijabs, turbans, yarmulkes and beards without fear of persecution."



Assemblyman Weprin and State Senator James Sanders are joined by members of the Sikh community for a press conference regarding the religious garb bill.

Assemblyman Weprin celebrates Bangladesh Independence Day

Here in Queens, Assemblyman Weprin represents one of the largest Bangladeshi-American communities in the world. March 26th, 1971 is memorialized as the official Independence Day of Bangladesh, as the people sought liberation and self-governance. In the district, as well as throughout country, members of the Bangladeshi-American community celebrated this occasion.



Assemblyman Weprin celebrates Bangladesh Independence Day with the Jamaica Community Council.



Rokeya Akhter, Mazeeda Uddin, and Raran Barua are recognized for their work by Assemblyman Weprin and Queens Borough President Katz at the Queens BP's Bangladesh Independence Day event.

Stop & Shop donates Passover food to the community



Assemblymen Weprin, with Councilmember Koslowitz, Senator Stavisky, and the Queens Jewish Community Council, thanks Stop & Shop for their generous donation of 1,000 pounds of food for QJCC's pantry.

Overcrowding at Richmond Hill High School

Richmond Hill High School has had its problems in dealing with severe overcrowding. In fact, the high school enrollment has been steadily increasing, necessitating the use of temporary trailers as classroom space. These structures have been in use for over a decade, and currently Richmond Hill High School utilizes 22 trailers.

Trailers were constructed with temporary usage in mind, with the understanding that additional permanent space would be built for classroom space. Over recent years, trailers used in New York City schools have shown alarming signs of deterioration, including mold, poor insulation, as well as other health and safety risks.

To solve this problem, Richmond Hill High School was promised an additional building in which to educate students. The annex on 118th street has been renovated with the agreement that the building would serve as additional classroom space for Richmond Hill High School. Recently, this deal was rescinded, as the current plan is to make this annex unavailable to the already overcrowded Richmond Hill High School.

Assemblyman Weprin, Public Advocate Letitia James, Borough President Katz, State Senator Sanders, as well as other elected officials and community activists, seek to save the annex for the students of Richmond Hill High School.

Assemblyman Weprin celebrates Lunar New Year



Assemblyman Weprin, along with Assemblymembers Kim and Braunstein celebrate Lunar New Year in Albany.



Assemblyman Weprin, Public Advocate James, and State Senator Sanders join the Richmond Hill High School PTA to save the annex to the high school.