



Assemblyman Cymbrowitz Reports to Seniors



Dear Friend:

As Chair of the Assembly’s Aging Committee, I am proud to represent one of the largest senior citizen constituencies in New York State. There are approximately 21,000 people age 65 and over in the 45th Assembly District, representing 17.9 percent of the district’s entire population.

We are fortunate to live at a time when advances in health care have made it possible for many more people than ever to reach their 80s, 90s and even 100 and beyond. While this is obviously a positive development, we all know that increased life expectancy brings its own set of challenges for all of us as a society to confront. Therefore, it is more important than ever to pursue legislation aimed at enhancing seniors’ quality of life, improving your health, increasing your level of safety, and maintaining your dignity and independence.

I encourage you to take a few minutes to read this special newsletter, which contains news and information specifically of interest to seniors. Let me know what you think. Your ideas are important to me, and I want to hear what you have to say.

Feel free to visit my district office any Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. You can reach me at 718-743-4078 or email cymbros@assembly.state.ny.us.

All the best –

Sincerely,

Steven Cymbrowitz
Steven H. Cymbrowitz
Member of Assembly

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Good News for SCRIE Recipients

This year I introduced a bill to grandfather in everyone who was in SCRIE as of January 1, 2015 so that their rent exemption will not be reduced or cancelled due to the requirement that their legal rent be at least 1/3 of their income. The income requirement of \$50,000 must still be met. It also applies to DRIE, the rent exemption for disabled residents.

I sponsored this bill in response to the technical issues that would have led to thousands of seniors paying more in rent or being dropped from the program due to the ratio not being properly calculated. The bill also creates a bridge for individuals who were dropped from SCRIE or DRIE on or after December 31, 2013 for an income above the \$29,000 limit in place at that time, but who qualified under the \$50,000 income limit that took effect July 1, 2014. These individuals would be able to regain their previously frozen rent amount.

My colleague Senator Diane Savino sponsored this bill in the Senate. I'm pleased to say that it passed both houses and will be sent to the Governor for signature.



Helping People Living With Alzheimer's

The number of Americans with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias will escalate rapidly in coming years as the baby boom generation ages. By 2050, the number of people age 65 and older with Alzheimer's disease may nearly triple, from 5 million to as many as 16 million, barring the development of medical breakthroughs to prevent, slow or stop the disease.

Alzheimer's is officially the 6th leading cause of death in the United States and the 5th leading cause of death for those aged 65 and older. It's incredibly important that we do all we can to help people with Alzheimer's, and their families, and devote the appropriate resources to managing the care of people with this terrible disease.

This session I introduced legislation that would require the State Office for the Aging, in conjunction with the Department of Health, to establish a statewide database of successful programs serving people with Alzheimer's disease and dementia. The information in the database would be made available to the public on the Office for the Aging's website.

Currently, there are many programs across the state that assist and support individuals with Alzheimer's disease and dementia. While many innovative ideas are implemented at the local level, it is difficult for groups in other areas of the state to find out about them.

Because of this legislation and the database it creates, groups that provide assistance to Alzheimer's and dementia patients would be able to replicate successful programming models that are being used anywhere in New York State. This is a case where access to information and the sharing of cutting-edge ideas would benefit thousands of patients and their families. This bill passed both houses and is awaiting signature by Governor Cuomo.

Confronting Elder Abuse

The number of seniors affected by elder abuse is rapidly increasing, with more than 260,000 older New Yorkers each year suffering from physical, emotional or financial elder abuse, caregiver neglect, or a combination thereof.

In May, I presided over a roundtable in Albany on elder abuse held by the Aging Committee. We invited a diverse group of individuals representing state agencies, senior organizations, domestic violence groups, and advocates for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Some of the things we discussed were common scams targeting the elderly, what state agencies are doing to improve awareness and help victims of elder abuse, how can we fight elder abuse while respecting older adults' rights and dignity, and what can the state do through legislation to reduce barriers and improve the ability of groups and agencies to work together.

This year the Assembly passed a resolution I introduced commemorating June 15th as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in New York State. World Elder Abuse Awareness Day was launched on June 15, 2006 by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations. Organizations and individuals from around the world use this day to raise awareness about the mistreatment of older adults.

A bill I introduced this session would require the State Office for the Aging, in consultation with the Office of Children and Family Services, to conduct a public education campaign to raise awareness about elder abuse. This multi-media campaign would provide information on the signs and symptoms of elder abuse, where people can report suspected elder abuse, and contact information for relevant programs and services. I'm pleased that this legislation passed both houses and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

Assemblyman Cymbrowitz Helps Seniors

My district office regularly assists seniors in applying for and resolving problems with entitlements, utility bills, insurance companies and government agencies. These are just two examples of the many people we help every day.

Clara F. received a bill of over \$1,400 from the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance for outstanding taxes, interest, and penalties even though her Social Security is not taxable. Worried and unsure of how to handle it, she called my office for help. With our assistance, Clara soon received not just a phone call telling her the bill had been zeroed, but an apology and peace of mind.

Pauline S. was denied for enhanced STAR and the senior citizen's exemption. Fulfilling every request that the NYC Department of Finance made of her, she struggled to make sense of why she wasn't able to receive the exemptions she needed. She called my office and put the problem in our hands. Preparing all of her documents and reaching out to the Department of Finance, we were able to work out the issues with her application and get her an exemption of about \$550.

In the Budget

Alzheimer's Disease

My colleagues and I were successful in allocating a total of \$25 million for Alzheimer's programs. This includes:

- \$4 million to Alzheimer's Community Assistance Programs
- \$4 million to Alzheimer's disease Assistance Centers
- \$15 million to an RFP for caregiver support programs
- \$1.5 million to an RFP for small community-based organizations for assistance programs
- \$0.5 million for additional evaluation and project oversight.

Elder Abuse

We added \$200,000 in funding to the Elderly Abuse Education and Outreach Program for a total allocation of \$945,000. This funding provides training and education around the state to individuals and programs to improve awareness and interventions in response to elder abuse.

Community Services for the Elderly

We successfully added \$2.5 million to CSE's funding allocation for a total of \$27,796,000. The CSE program is a unique funding stream that allows counties to use the money as needed on a wide array of supportive programs for older adults and their caregivers.

NY Connects

We added \$8 million for the expansion of NY Connects, a statewide program in which individuals receive free information, assistance and referral to services and supports on long-term care.

Regulating Social Adult Day Programs

Social adult day programs were another area of priority in the Assembly this year. I introduced a bill which would ensure that all social adult day programs operating in New York State comply with the rules and regulations established by the State Office for the Aging (SOFA).

Currently, social adult day programs are regulated directly by SOFA only if they receive funding from that office. The absence of an across-the-board policy of regulation and oversight has led to concerns across the state about abuses that are taking place in adult day programs that may operate with insufficient staffing and provide inadequate services to clients.

Unfortunately, families have no way of knowing what kind of program they are sending their loved ones to. Nor should they be expected to. Families have a right to expect a decent quality of care and consistency of service when entrusting their vulnerable loved ones to a social adult day program. This legislation would ensure that all social adult day programs must comply with regulations promulgated by SOFA and be subject to appropriate oversight.

This legislation, which was sponsored by Senator Diane Savino in the Senate, passed both houses and will be sent to the Governor for signature.



Assemblyman

**Steven
Cymbrowitz**



Reports to Seniors



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