

Assemblyman **CYMBROWITZ**

Reports to the Community



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Dear Neighbor,

The new year has begun. For me, that means the start of a new legislative session and focusing on the many pressing challenges that confront our entire state – the challenge of creating jobs, educating our children, taking care of seniors, improving the quality of life for all and ensuring that our state continues to be a place where people want to live and work.

During the last legislative session, my colleagues and I successfully restored much-needed funding for our schools, funded economic development projects to create more jobs, implemented protections for rent-regulated tenants and held spending growth to less than two percent for the fifth consecutive year. We stood up for programs that make a difference in people's lives and secured needed investments that will make New York a stronger place in the years to come. This work will continue during the upcoming session, and there will be new issues that will demand my attention.

Please take a few minutes to read this newsletter, which spotlights some of the things I've been doing to assist our community. Remember that my staff and I are here for you, whether that means answering your questions, helping you navigate bureaucracy or providing support with a neighborhood issue or individual matter. Remember that we are your go-to resource right here in the community.

Feel free to visit my district office at 1800 Sheepshead Bay Road (between Emmons Avenue and Shore Parkway) Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. You can reach me at (718) 743-4078 or email cymbros@assembly.state.ny.us. If you're on Facebook, please "like" my page, where I post items that may be of interest to you and your neighbors.

Have a healthy and happy new year.

Steven H. Cymbrowitz
Member of Assembly

Assemblyman Cymbrowitz Launches Eyeglass Collection Drive

Wondering what to do with your old eyeglass frames? Put them to good use and perform a public service at the same time.

Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz (D-Brooklyn) is collecting used eyeglasses to help people who otherwise can't afford them. People can drop off their old glasses at his district office, 1800 Sheepshead Bay Road, or at the offices of optometrists Drs. Wilck, Schwartz and Novak, 445 Kings Highway, who are partnering with Assemblyman Cymbrowitz in this initiative.

The glasses will be donated to New Eyes for the Needy, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization founded in 1932 to improve the vision of the poor.

It is estimated that nearly 700 million people have impaired vision that could easily be helped with a pair of glasses. Instead, due to lack of insurance or inability to pay, they're forced to live with functional blindness — the inability to see well enough to do basic everyday tasks, such as reading, writing, cooking and holding a job. For children as well as adults, the implications can be lifelong and devastating.

Assemblyman Cymbrowitz' office is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Call (718) 743-4078 for more information.

The offices of **Dr. Wilck, Schwartz and Novak** are open Monday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesday and Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Homeowners Get Free Rain Barrels Thanks to Assemblyman Cymbrowitz



Assemblyman Cymbrowitz recently sponsored a rain barrel giveaway to help homeowners cut down on their water bills and become more environmentally friendly in the process. The barrels collect rainwater that can be used to water your lawn, wash your car and for other purposes. They can keep excess water out of our sewer system during rainstorms and save homeowners money. Thanks to the New York City Department of Environmental Protection for supplying the barrels, Three Hierarchs Greek Orthodox Church for hosting the event, and Dynamic Youth Community for sending volunteers.



Hundreds Take Advantage of Free Flu Shots at Assemblyman Cymbrowitz' Office

Hundreds of residents came to Assemblyman Cymbrowitz' district office to take advantage of the free flu shot initiative he sponsors annually with Mount Sinai Hospital Brooklyn.

"I am pleased to once again offer this important program," said Assemblyman Cymbrowitz. "As we have demonstrated in previous years, a little prevention goes a long way toward avoiding the debilitating, costly and potentially deadly effects of the flu."



Assemblyman Cymbrowitz Joins AT&T in Teaching Seniors to Embrace the Digital Age

Assemblyman Cymbrowitz joined representatives from AT&T at the Sephardic Community Center to teach seniors how to use their cell phones to post on social media and stay connected in this digital age. AT&T's Digital You program also advised the seniors on making smart decisions online. As the Assembly's Aging Committee Chairman, Assemblyman Cymbrowitz works hard to keep seniors active and independent in their communities, and learning how to become tech-savvy is one way to do that.



Heating Bills Chilling Your Bones?

Assemblyman Cymbrowitz Urges Residents to Apply for HEAP & Heartshare Neighborhood Heating Fund

The thought of paying home heating costs this winter is enough to send a chill through many low-income seniors and families in Brooklyn.

Fortunately, help is on the way thanks to Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz (D-Brooklyn), who is encouraging eligible residents to apply for two money-saving programs, the Heartshare Neighborhood Heating Fund (NHF) and Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP).

Assemblyman Cymbrowitz' office at 1800 Sheepshead Bay Road is once again an official NHF application partner site. Applications are available at the office and Assemblyman Cymbrowitz' staff will assist constituents in his district in completing them.

Eligibility is based on household size and gross monthly income. All qualified households will receive a \$200 grant. To see if you are eligible and for more information, call Assemblyman Cymbrowitz' office at (718) 743-4078.

The Neighborhood Heating Fund is run under the auspices of Heartshare Human Services of New York, which receives both grants and private donations. National Grid is a major sponsor of the program.

The NHF program runs until funds are depleted, so constituents are encouraged to apply as soon as possible.

Eligible residents are also urged to apply for monetary aid from the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP).

HEAP is funded by the federal government and is overseen by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. Eligible households can receive a one-time benefit of up to \$625 this winter depending upon income, household size and heating source. For the upcoming season, a household of four can earn up to \$51,792, or \$4,316 a month, and still qualify for assistance.

Households may also be eligible for an emergency benefit if they are in danger

of running out of heating fuel or having their utility service shut off. Applications for emergency benefits will be accepted beginning Monday, January 4, 2016. Households facing an energy emergency should call their local department of social services for assistance.

For more information about HEAP, go to <http://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap>.

New Yorkers can also find contact information for their county department of social services at <http://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/HEAP-contacts.pdf>.

Assemblyman Cymbrowitz' office is happy to assist residents with filling out HEAP applications, so stop by if you need help.

Assemblyman Cymbrowitz Leads Hearings as Chairman of Aging Committee

Staying abreast of issues affecting older New Yorkers is one of Assemblyman Cymbrowitz' foremost priorities as Chairman of the Aging Committee. In recent weeks, he has presided over hearings and roundtable discussions to examine urgent issues that affect New York State's rapidly growing senior constituency.

In late October, Assemblyman Cymbrowitz led a public hearing in Manhattan with Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, Chair of the Consumer Affairs and Protection Committee, to hear testimony regarding the Department of State's budget and resources for protecting consumers, especially older New Yorkers, against consumer frauds and scams.

"Seniors are often appealing targets for scammers. They are more likely to have assets and savings in addition to their retirement benefits and pensions. Unscrupulous people prey on the family loyalty of older adults as well as their inclination to believe the best of people," he said.

"To improve efforts to prevent frauds and scams in the future, it is important to understand how these criminals gain the trust of older adults and use it for their own purposes," he added.



In mid-November Assemblyman Cymbrowitz traveled to Rochester, where he presided over a regional roundtable focusing on elder abuse. "The statistics are troubling," he said. "Each year elder abuse affects approximately 260,000 older New Yorkers in the forms of physical, emotional or financial elder abuse, caregiver neglect, or a combination thereof. Elder abuse cuts across racial, religious, cultural and economic lines and the numbers are on the rise."

He noted that the Assembly has been working diligently to increase awareness of the many forms of elder abuse in the hope of turning the tide on this tragic problem.

Assemblyman Cymbrowitz also led hearings in New York City and Albany with Assemblyman David Weprin, Chair of the Task Force on People with Disabilities, to hear testimony regarding the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) study to determine the feasibility of creating an Office of Community Living (OCL).

Assemblyman Cymbrowitz Awards Summer Readers

Studies show that students who read during their summer vacations do better in class when school resumes in September. To encourage students to not only read, but read more over the summer, Assemblyman Cymbrowitz sponsors a Summer Reading Challenge. Students who read for at least 15 minutes a day, 40 or more days over the summer, received an Excellence in Reading Certificate from Assemblyman Cymbrowitz during a ceremony in our Sheepshead Bay office. Parents and siblings were on hand to cheer on the winning readers.



Assemblyman Cymbrowitz Helps Create Scholarship Program for Teens Interested in STEM Careers

High-achieving high school students interested in science, technology, engineering and math will be able to benefit from a brand-new program created by New York State that offers full tuition scholarships to kids interested in pursuing STEM careers, Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz (D-Brooklyn) said today.

Passed as part of this year's budget, the New York State Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Incentive Program is open to students who have graduated in the top 10 percent of their high school class and who enroll full-time in an approved STEM undergraduate program at a SUNY or CUNY college. Students must maintain a cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of 2.5 or higher and, after graduation, work full-time in a STEM field and reside in New York for five continuous years.

"Choosing a college major can be an intimidating process. Students entering higher education today have a vast selection of colleges and majors to choose from, but they face the decision knowing they are likely to take on burdensome student debt to finance their future," Assemblyman Cymbrowitz said. "For students who love to solve problems, want to make the world a better place and constantly wonder about how things work, a career in a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) field can be an attractive option."

Students receiving a STEM scholarship are entitled to an annual award for up to four academic years (or five years if the program requires five years of study). If the student fails to complete a degree in STEM or does not work in a STEM field in NYS for five consecutive years after graduation, the scholarship is converted to a student loan plus interest.

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For more information or to apply for this scholarship, visit the program's website (www.hesc.ny.gov/stem).



Assemblyman
**STEVEN
 CYMBROWITZ**

Reports to the Community

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Here are some updates on bills sponsored by Assemblyman Cymbrowitz during the most recent legislative session:

A.453 ■ Requires the Department of Financial Services (DFS) to examine and make recommendations concerning the treatment of anti-concurrent causation clauses in relation to homeowners' insurance coverage for sewer backups. The Superintendent of DFS must also submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature by January 1, 2017. **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR CUOMO**

A.3675 ■ Would establish a two-year moratorium on the Department of Environmental Conservation's controversial plan to eradicate all wild mute swans in the state by 2025 and declare them a "prohibited species." The also requires the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to demonstrate that actual damage to the environment or other species has been caused by the mute swan population across the state. **VETOED BY GOVERNOR CUOMO**

A.5352 ■ Ensures that all social adult day programs in the state are subject to the same oversight by the State Office for the Aging (SOFA). **VETOED BY GOVERNOR CUOMO**

A.7612A ■ Requires that the State Office for the Aging, in consultation with the Office of Children and Family Services, conduct a public education campaign regarding elder abuse. **VETOED BY GOVERNOR CUOMO**

A.7820 ■ Would extend the authorization of the long term care ombudsman program to advocate on behalf of managed long term care participants until December 31, 2017. **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR CUOMO**

A.7914-A ■ Creates a re-enrollment opportunity in SCRIE/DRIE for individuals whose rent increase exemption expired on or after December 31, 2013, and whose income made them ineligible to renew the benefit, but who then became eligible for the benefit once again under the increased income limit that took effect on July 1, 2014. **DELIVERED TO GOVERNOR CUOMO**