



Community Newsletter

ASSEMBLY MEMBER DANIEL O'DONNELL

Manhattan Valley ■ Morningside Heights
Upper West Side ■ West Harlem

SPRING 2013

■ SERVING NEW YORK'S 69TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT ■

Dear Neighbor,

With warm weather finally drawing near and the 2013-2014 Budget signed into law, my colleagues and I have returned to Albany to work on this year's non-financial priorities. I am planning to focus on supporting our state's schools and students, preventing hydrofracking and all its associated dangers, and a number of criminal justice and correctional facility issues.

I have been paying increased attention to criminal justice concerns since January, when I was honored to be named Chair of the Assembly's Correction Committee. For more on this new role, look for an article later in this newsletter.

This year, for the third consecutive time, both the Assembly and Senate passed the state budget early. The final version closed a \$1.3 billion deficit, increased investments in affordable housing and tax relief for middle class families, and augmented education funding across the state. While I advocated for even higher levels of funding and strongly believe more is necessary, I am pleased that we continue to see an upward trend in funding levels over the years. More detailed budget information can be found on the right side of this page. If you have questions or comments about what was passed this year, please feel free to contact me by email at odonnelld@assembly.state.ny.us, or by phone at (212) 866-3970.

In our community, I have a number of exciting events coming up soon and one occurring right now! My 10th Annual Community Reading Challenge is in full swing, but there is still time for readers in grades pre-K through 8 to participate and receive invitations to the culminating book festivals in May! Also watch for information on my annual Cell Phone Drive and, as always, my free monthly legal clinics.

I hope you will find this newsletter informative and useful. My staff and I are always available to assist you in my Community Office located at 245 W. 104th Street, just off Broadway, or by phone at (212) 866-3970. I encourage you to call, write, or visit us, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM. For those with specific housing problems, I have a dedicated housing specialist on staff available to help every day.

Finally, watch out for information about upcoming events, and if you would like to receive monthly email updates from me, please send an email with the subject "subscribe" to odonnelld@assembly.state.ny.us.

Very truly yours,

¡Atención!

La oficina de la comunidad del asambleísta O'Donnell tiene disponible empleados que hablan español para asistir al público tiempo completo, lunes a viernes de 9:00 AM a 5:30 PM. La oficina está localizada en el 245 West 104th Street, cerca de Broadway. También pueden llamar a la oficina en horas laborables al (212) 866-3970.

Recuerden que nuestro boletín informativo está disponible en español. Para obtener una copia favor de comunicarse con la oficina del asambleísta Daniel O'Donnell.

Final Budget Increases Funding for Education and Affordable Housing

This year, the Assembly worked diligently and successfully to ensure the majority of its priorities were intact following weeks of negotiations with Governor Cuomo. For the third year in a row, the final budget was passed early, closing a \$1.3 billion budget deficit while maintaining, and even expanding, funding for many essential programs. The 2013-2014 plan includes increased funding to New York City education programs, investments in affordable housing, and tax relief for working families, among other key priorities of Assembly Member O'Donnell's.

During budget negotiations, the Assembly fought to increase overall education spending and to restore New York City school aid withdrawn during unsuccessful negotiations over teacher and administrator evaluations. The final New York State FY2013-2014 budget includes \$8.28 billion in New York City education funding, an increase of \$363.9 million since last year. While New York City will face a penalty this year as a result of its delayed teacher evaluation plans, the \$240 million will be restored in next year's budget. Assembly Member O'Donnell is optimistic that \$363.9 million in increased education funding will do more than fill this temporary gap and will ensure that New York City students are not punished for the delayed negotiations.

In addition to the increased funding for New York City, the budget included other important investments in New York's education programs. These include new grants for full-day and half-day pre-K seats, the second consecutive increase in community college base aid, a three percent increase in funding for college opportunity programs aimed at disadvantaged students, and a \$4.2 million increase in statewide public library funding. Assembly Member O'Donnell believes there is no greater tool to ensure the health and prosperity of New York State than a vibrant and well-funded public school system.

Assembly Member O'Donnell and his colleagues in the Assembly Majority also fought to protect New York's working families by raising the minimum wage. Currently set at \$7.25, the wage will be increased to \$8.00 on December 31, 2013, and to \$8.75 on December 31, 2014. By December 31, 2015, the minimum wage will be \$9.00. In addition to the wage raise, the budget preserved tax relief measures aimed at middle income families for the next three years. This plan, first implemented last year, provides nearly \$700 million in tax relief to the middle class every year and

Continued on Page 2



Assembly Member O'Donnell speaking at an anti-hydrofracking rally held in New York City in April.

Final Budget Increases Funding for Education and Affordable Housing - Continued from page 1

establishes fairness and equality in the tax code, which had not seen a major restructuring in decades. Similarly, the inner-city youth employment program was extended through 2017. This \$24 million tax credit, applied over four years, provides incentive for employers to hire unemployed youth between 16 and 24 years of age.

The budget agreement also provides funds to create and improve affordable housing options, which Assembly Member O'Donnell believes are essential for a diverse and flourishing community. Over the next five years, New York will finance \$1 billion in housing renovations and acquisitions. This investment will create 14,300 new affordable housing units. The plan also includes \$17.6 million for the rehabilitation and improvement of 45 Mitchell-Lama housing projects and \$5.8 million to fund the Tenant Protection Unit. O'Donnell is confident that these measures will expand opportunity and provide long overdue improvements.

While O'Donnell knows that the state's most vulnerable citizens are still feeling the effects of the recession, and believes strongly that more must be done to support them, he also feels the increases included in this year's budget are a good start to ensuring a prosperous future for all New Yorkers.

Join Assembly Member O'Donnell's 10th Annual Community Reading Challenge!

This year's Tenth Annual Community Reading Challenge kicked off on **April 15th!** Visit Assembly Member O'Donnell's office or a participating library to join this community event!

This year's theme is **Dignity for All** and will celebrate the diversity and culture of our neighborhood. For the challenge, students in grades pre-K through 8 will be provided with a book list, reading log, and a list of suggested activities and events that Assembly Member O'Donnell hopes will stimulate conversation on diversity. These materials can be picked up at the Assembly Member's Community Office, located at **245 West 104th St.**, or at any of the following participating libraries: George Bruce, Morningside Heights, or Bloomingdale.

The Challenge will culminate in **three book festivals**. On **May 9th at George Bruce**, **16th at Morningside Heights** and **17th at Bloomingdale Library**, join us for gatherings filled with food, prizes like free books and bookstore gift cards, special author guests, and lots of fun! If you have any questions about this year's Reading Challenge, please don't hesitate to visit any of the participating libraries or call Assembly Member O'Donnell's Community Office at **(212) 866-3970**.

O'Donnell Allocates Funds for Community Organizations

Assembly Member O'Donnell is pleased to announce that after two years without legislative initiative funding available, 2012 legislative initiatives were belatedly restored for the below 501(c)(3) charitable community organizations. These organizations are largely based in the 69th Assembly District, but a number are centered elsewhere in NYC and provide services to large numbers of 69th Assembly District residents.

American Red Cross in Greater New York • Bailey House • Ballet Theatre Foundation • Broadway League • Broadway Mall Maintenance Fund • Common Cents New York • Friends of Island Academy • Friends of Morningside Park • Friends of PS 163 • Friends of PS 166 • Friends of the Manhattan School for Children • Fund for PS 84 • Gay Men's Health Crisis • Harlem United Community Aids Center • Historic Districts Council • Housing Court Answers • Landmark West! • Learning Leaders • Legal Information for Families Today • Legal Services NYC • Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center • Lifeforce in Later Years • Medicare Rights Center • MFY Legal Services • Morningside Heights/West Harlem Sanitation Coalition • Morningside Retirement and Health Services • New York Cares • New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project • New York Classical Theatre • New York Foundation for Senior Citizens • New York Lawyers for the Public Interest • New York Legal Assistance Group • New York Road Runners • New York Shakespeare Festival • North River Community Environmental Review Board • One Stop Senior Services • PS 75 PTA • PTA of MS 54 • Roundabout Theatre Company • Science Schools Initiative • Service Program for Older People • Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Elders • Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of Manhattan • Urban Yoga Foundation • Vocal Ease • West Harlem Community Preservation Organization • Westside Community Garden

2013 Book Drive a Great Success!

A huge thank you to our community for making this year's book drive a great success! Assembly Member O'Donnell's office **collected over 2,000 books**, more than twice the number collected last year! These books have been donated to the nonprofit organization Project Cicero, and have been distributed to underserved New York City public schools and libraries. Thank you for your generous contributions! For more information on Project Cicero, please visit www.projectcicero.org.



Assembly Member O'Donnell meeting with students from Goddard Riverside Community Center's Campaign for Summer Jobs.



Assembly Member O'Donnell speaking to Danya Shneyer and other preservation activists at a benefit for the Morningside Heights Historic District Committee.

Photo by Steve Friedman 2013.

Assembly Member O'Donnell Named Chair of Correction Committee

In January, Assembly Member O'Donnell was named Chair of the Correction Committee by Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver. Given Assembly Member O'Donnell's past work as a public defender and his current Chairmanship of the Codes Subcommittee on Criminal Procedure, O'Donnell is well suited to lead this important committee.

The New York State Assembly Correction Committee is responsible for legislation affecting the operational aspects of both state and local correctional facilities. Assembly Member O'Donnell will work with a number of other committees to pass progressive and common-sense legislation for the benefit of our citizens and correctional system. These committees include: Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Codes, Health, and Mental Health.

Currently there are 61 state correctional facilities and 62 local correction systems under the purview of the Correction Committee. As of December 2012, New York State had the third largest correctional system in the nation, with over 84,000 inmates and 40,000 correctional employees.

Assembly Member O'Donnell is involved with all aspects of the correctional system in his new position as Committee Chair, including prison population oversight and the Board of Parole, as well as community supervision and programs. O'Donnell's goal is to use his position to encourage the proper rehabilitation and education of the prison population in an effort to reduce recidivism and give those who have been incarcerated the tools they need to be self-sufficient and crime-free.

O'Donnell and the Correction Committee also have oversight responsibilities for the budget as it relates to post-conviction issues. The Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS), which is accountable for these issues, was granted over \$3 billion for the last fiscal year.

Most recently, Assembly Member O'Donnell visited Coxsackie Correctional Facility, a maximum-security facility near Albany. There he met with inmates, the prison's Superintendent and other staff, and visited all areas of the facility, including classrooms, libraries, vocational workshops, and the Special Housing Units. Assembly Member O'Donnell looks forward to visiting other facilities throughout the year.

There are many topics on Assembly Member O'Donnell's legislative agenda for the Correction Committee. Among the most salient are promoting higher education in prison and evaluating the usefulness of solitary confinement, as well as examining geriatric parole policies and reworking our state's expungement laws. These topics and associated legislation will be explored during the remainder of the Assembly Session.

Assembly Member O'Donnell Introduces Two New Education Bills

In his role as the only Assembly Education Committee member representing Manhattan, Assembly Member O'Donnell pays close attention to issues affecting New York students, especially those in Manhattan and our community. He has recently introduced two new education bills to better protect and support our students and schools.

On the state level, the New York State Education Department recently agreed to share personally identifiable student and teacher information with a national corporation called inBloom, Inc. The company plans to store this material, which includes details such as

Continued on Page 4

TENANT'S CORNER: Notice of Public Meeting of the Rent Guidelines Board Regarding Rent-Stabilized Apartments

This year, New York City's Rent Guidelines Board (RGB) will hold its annual public hearing on **Thursday, June 13th**. This is an opportunity for rent-stabilized tenants and landlords to communicate their views on the RGB's proposed rent increases for renewal leases that commence between October 1, 2013, and September 30, 2014. Assembly Member O'Donnell submits testimony every year to urge the RGB to vote for the lowest possible rent increases. He encourages rent-stabilized tenants to do the same, as this is the public's only opportunity to influence this important decision.

The hearing will be conducted at the Emigrant Savings Bank Building, located at **49-51 Chambers Street** (between Broadway and Centre Street). Tenants who wish to testify may pre-register, but it is not necessary to do so. To pre-register, call the RGB at **(212) 385-2934**. The hearing begins at 10 AM and ends at 7 PM. Members of the public can submit their written testimony to the RGB at the hearing or mail their testimony before June 13th to:

**New York City Rent Guidelines Board
51 Chambers Street, Suite 202
New York, NY 10007**

Those who testify in person will have three minutes to speak and can use their time to inform the nine-member board (who are all appointed by the city's mayor) of how rent increases will affect them personally.

This information is all subject to change at the last minute. For the most up-to-date information, please call Joyce at (212) 866-3970 closer to June 13th.



Assembly Member O'Donnell speaking alongside Education Committee Chair Catherine Nolan and other legislators about the importance of increasing education funding in the 2013-2014 budget.

Assembly Member O'Donnell Introduces Two New Education Bills - Continued from Page 3

names, addresses, test scores, disabilities, economic status, and attendance records, in a "data store" on the cloud managed by Amazon.com. However, inBloom, Inc. acknowledges that it "cannot guarantee the security of the information stored" online.

To prevent this egregious privacy violation, O'Donnell has introduced Assembly Bill A6059, which will require explicit parental consent before a student's information may be included in this database. This will ensure that parents may choose whether to allow their children's information to be shared.

Second, the New York City Department of Education recently issued a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) from developers to tear down three Manhattan schools, including P.S. 191 and P.S. 199 on the Upper West Side, and erect luxury high-rise apartment buildings in their places. The schools would be relegated to a few floors in these residential buildings. Because the land and development would be overseen by the Educational Construction Fund, an organization created in 1967 to facilitate the use of private funding for school construction projects, these proposals would not be required to undergo any public review process whatsoever.

Assembly Member O'Donnell has introduced A6058 to require developers to undergo the Universal Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) and full review by Community Education Councils. Under ULURP, proposals must be evaluated by the City Planning Commission, the Community Board, the Borough President, and the City Council. School property and buildings are a finite and valuable resource in New York City, and they must not be sold or transferred without the community's input and support.

Upcoming Cell Phone Drive!

A donated cell phone can become a lifeline for an isolated or otherwise vulnerable individual who needs to call 911, including seniors or victims of domestic violence. Secure the Call is a charity with a single mission: to collect and convert as many old cell phones as possible into 911 emergency access phones.

Please help us support this important cause by bringing your used cell phones to Assembly Member O'Donnell's Community Office, 245 W. 104th St. (between Broadway and West End) any time during the month of June. For more information, please visit www.securethecall.org.

June 1st – 30th, 2013

Internships Available

Assembly Member O'Donnell's Community Office is now accepting applications for the summer internship program from individuals who are high school age or older. To apply, please fax or email a cover letter and resume to **(212) 864-1095** or wilsonc@assembly.state.ny.us.

For more information, please call **(212) 866-3970** and ask for **Callie**.

E-Newsletters

Do you want more frequent updates about interesting community events, important government information, and what Assembly Member O'Donnell has been working on? Sign up to receive his monthly electronic newsletters by sending an email to odonnelld@assembly.state.ny.us.

245 West 104th Street, New York, New York 10025

Daniel O'Donnell's Community Newsletter

Assembly Member ■ 69th District
Manhattan Valley • Morningside Heights
Upper West Side • West Harlem

PRSR STD.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Albany, New York
Permit No. 75



COMMUNITY OFFICE INFORMATION:

Open Monday through Friday

9:00 AM - 5:30 PM

(212) 866-3970

odonnelld@assembly.state.ny.us

Assembly Member O'Donnell's Upcoming FREE Legal Clinics

For constituents who need help with legal issues but are unable to come to Assembly Member O'Donnell's Community Office during the workday, Assembly Member O'Donnell hosts a monthly evening opportunity for constituents to consult with a volunteer attorney.

Call **Joyce** at **(212) 866-3970** to make an appointment.

Upcoming clinic dates: May 30th | June 27th | August 29th | September 26th