



News from Assemblywoman

Sandy Galef

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Dear Constituent,

As you know, our state legislative session runs from January through June. We focus on the state budget bills from January through the end of March, and on other important legislation from April through June. We have accomplished a great deal this session, some of which I have shared with you in an earlier newsletter this year. I highlight additional accomplishments in this newsletter.

I am grateful for all of the regular communication I receive from my constituents. Whether through emails, newsletter responses, at my Town Meetings and forums, or other local events around the district, or even the supermarket, I so appreciate hearing from you and learning where you stand on important issues. In the pages of this newsletter, I have tried to identify some of the hot topics I have been hearing about from you. From Common Core to Ivory Tusks, from the Women's Equality Agenda to GMO labeling, we have taken action on many of these issues. In some cases those actions have been supported by the Senate and the Governor. Please see details in the body of this publication.

One highlight from last year's session is that my bill calling for a constitutional amendment that would eliminate the requirement for hard-paper copies of bills on legislators' desks, will now come before the public in November. There is also another constitutional amendment calling for independent redistricting. I urge you to exercise your right to vote and become informed about these initiatives before the election. Feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

As always, it is my great pleasure to serve you in the 95th Assembly District as we recover and rebuild our state and move forward together.

Sincerely,

Constitutional Amendments

This November, three proposals will be placed upon the ballot for New Yorkers to vote on. Below is a description of the ballot proposals to give you detailed information about what you are being asked to decide. The first two represent Constitutional Amendments to our New York State Constitution. As you consider this information, please remember that the most important thing you can do is participate in the process. Please call me if you have any questions.

Paperless Bills

This proposed amendment would eliminate the constitutional requirement that a bill must be printed on paper and placed on legislators' desks before becoming a law. Each year, the New York State Legislature considers thousands of bills. The proposed process would allow for these bills to be "e-printed" and distributed to legislators electronically, rather than in physical paper form. Legislators would receive bills and amendments via their laptops, tablets and computers. The proposal would not affect other constitutional requirements for enacting bills into law.



Here I am with some of the thousands of bills that are constitutionally required to be printed and on each legislator's desk before we vote on them. You have the opportunity to vote on an amendment that could change this.

Independent Redistricting Commission

Currently, congressional and state legislative district lines are drawn by the state legislature every 10 years. The proposed amendment would change the process for drawing new districts by creating an Independent Redistricting Commission with 10 members appointed in a bipartisan manner. Each member of the commission must be a registered New York voter. Within the past three years, members of the commission could not have served as legislators or members of Congress, been elected to statewide office, worked as lobbyists, chaired a political party or been employed in the executive or legislative branches of state government.

The process for the proposed Independent Redistricting Commission is as follows: The commission would hold public hearings and make information available to the public; at least 7 of 10 members would need to vote to send the redistricting plan to the state Legislature for approval; the Legislature would vote on the plan submitted by the Independent Redistricting Commission; if the Legislature rejects the plan, the commission would revise it, and if it is rejected again, the Legislature could amend it within narrow limits.

When drawing new district lines, the proposed commission must: work to guarantee minority voting rights; ensure communities of interest are protected; ensure candidates are not favored or disfavored; include approximately equal numbers of people for each district; make an effort to keep boundaries for each district contiguous and compact.

Smart Schools Bond Act

The proposed initiative would create a \$2 billion bond that would provide funding for technology and infrastructure in New York State schools. The Smart Schools Bond Act would fund: high-speed Internet in schools; updated technologies in the classroom; new classroom space for pre-K programs; projects that replace "classroom trailers" with permanent classroom space; and, high-tech school safety measures.

Topics About Which I Received the Most Communications from My Constituents

My constituents are frequently expressing their views on legislation that could come before me in the Assembly. Over the course of the legislative session I received thousands of emails, letters and phone calls from many people, sharing their opinions on a wide range of topics. Below is a summary of the most popular topics, in no particular order, and the status of the legislation.

Education Funding

In the last three years, we have increased state funding for education by \$2.9 billion. The 2014-2015 enacted budget allocates a record \$1.1 billion in additional monies, the highest level of state education funding in recent history.

GMO Legislation

I co-sponsored bill A3525 which will require labeling of genetically engineered foods as well as products containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs). This would bring us a step closer to consumers' rights to know what is in their food. While it has not passed in the legislature, I will continue to advocate for the bill's passage.

Child Safe Products Act

I co-sponsored this bill, A6328, which passed the Assembly and will continue to advocate for this legislation as I feel this is a serious issue with potential long term health impacts on our children. We must regulate and be aware of what chemicals our children are exposed to.

Fracking Waste Ban

I have introduced legislation, A4559, which would prohibit the use of this wastewater on state roads, and would make it a prohibited product, therefore unavailable to state or commercial entities. We need to do all we can to protect our environment and our water quality from any dangerous substances.

Fracking Moratorium

I co-sponsored legislation, A5424-B, which was passed by the Assembly this year, suspending the Department of Environmental Conservation from issuing new natural gas drilling permits for horizontal drilling and high-volume hydrofracking for three years.

Ivory Sales

This bill, A10143, was signed into law on August 12th, Chapter 326. It will prohibit the purchase and sale of ivory articles and rhinoceros horns, as well as increase the penalties for the illegal sales of these articles. I supported this legislation and hope it will help protect these magnificent species that are harmed for their tusks and horns.

National Popular Vote

I am a long-time supporter of bill, A4422, which would transition New York to a presidential election system based on the popular vote to ensure that all votes in New York matter. It will create incentives for presidential candidates to actively campaign here. This bill passed both houses and was signed by the governor. Up until now, nine states plus the District of Columbia have enacted this legislation, but more states are required for it to take effect nationally.

Women's Equality Act

As a co-sponsor of this legislation, I feel this bill addresses many serious issues that impact women's equality and opportunities. A8070 would break down barriers that extend discrimination based on gender by: achieving equal pay for equal work; stopping sexual harassment in the workplace; fighting human trafficking; increasing protections for domestic violence victims; ending housing discrimination

for domestic violence victims; preventing family status discrimination at work; stopping pregnancy discrimination in the workplace; ensuring women can recover attorney's fees in discrimination cases; and protecting a woman's right to make decisions about her reproductive health.

Common Core

We passed multiple bills in the legislature to reform the Common Core's implementation and help students succeed. This legislation would ban Common Core testing for grades pre-K through 2, prohibit schools from using state assessment test scores to determine student promotion in grades 3-8, protect sensitive student data and create a Parents' Bill of Rights to ensure data privacy, and delay for two years the use of grades 3-8 Common Core test scores as a factor in teacher evaluations. I believe these modifications will relieve some of the unnecessary stress and anxiety for children, parents, and educators and allow more time for effective implementation of 21st century-appropriate standards for our students.

Local Gas Pipelines & Transmission Lines

I am opposed to the introduction of and/or expansion of new gas pipelines in the region, such as those associated with Spectra's Algonquin Incremental Pipeline (AIM) project because of their larger capacity and proximity to Indian Point Energy Center, as well as the West Point Transmission Project which would site new transmission lines in Verplanck, also very near to Indian Point. I am concerned about the confluence of these resources in this tiny residential hamlet in the Town of Cortlandt.



I have many visitors in Albany who come to discuss various issues of import as well as to be recognized for their accomplishments. Here, I am pictured with some of the NY Rangers Hockey Team and also students from Haldane School District who were in Albany this session.

2014 Session Highlights

Property Tax Freeze

The state will issue rebates to property taxpayers for local property taxes that exceed those from the prior year if local governments and school districts stay within the state property tax cap and, in year two, stay within the cap and identify savings of one percent in each year of the next three successive years.

Combatting Heroin & Opioid Use

Legislation was passed and signed into law to help address the growing heroin and opioid epidemic that has many of my constituents and me concerned. Insurers must now follow nationally-recognized treatment standards, and during the appeals process, patients must continue to receive insurance coverage for treatment. These rules will ensure that patients can get necessary treatment. Meanwhile, penalties have been increased for practitioners and pharmacists who sell or distribute substances illegally, and the State Police narcotics enforcement has been doubled in size to include experienced investigators. The state has further committed \$1 million towards a public awareness campaign by the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, and has partnered with the Albany Medical Center and the National Harm Reduction Coalition to offer training in the use of intranasal naloxone, which helps to counteract the effects of overdose.

Medical Marijuana

A compromise was reached between both houses of the legislature to enact a limited medical marijuana program in New York for patients with serious conditions. The new law will include a certification process to ensure physicians qualify to distribute the drug. Registry Identification Cards will be issued for patients requiring the drug, containing necessary information on the patient and their proper dosage. The law provides for penalties for practitioners prescribing medical marijuana to a patient who does not require it, as well as patients who sell their medical marijuana.

Solar Energy

The state has pledged \$1 billion to NY-Sun over the next decade to help the solar industry achieve sustainability. Government incentives will decline as the industry reaches self-sufficiency.

Independent Enforcement Unit

The enacted budget creates an independent enforcement division, which is led by a chief enforcement counsel, whose job is to investigate any potential violations of the NYS Election law.

Strengthening the Film & TV Industry

This year, New York allotted \$336 million in tax credits towards film and television. As a result, \$1.5 billion was spent in the state on motion picture and TV production and many temporary and permanent jobs have been created. Walt Disney Company, Marvel, and Netflix Inc. have confirmed that they will be filming several television shows and mini-series in the state, signifying an unprecedented amount of production occurring in New York.

STEM

Students in the top 10 percent of high school classes will be eligible to receive full tuition at SUNY or CUNY schools, as long as they pursue a STEM career, and work in New York State for at least five years following graduation. STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, and this program aims to help employers fill important jobs in these fields.

Fighting Lyme Disease

A bill, which passed both houses and awaits the governor's signature, will help those with chronic Lyme Disease obtain necessary treatments. With a dramatic increase in Lyme Disease cases, we must make sure that people have access to a variety of treatments to stop the detrimental effects of this disease.

Distracted Driving

Legislation was passed in this year's budget that will take effect in November to suspend the license of a driver who is convicted of using a cell phone or texting while driving and is under 21 years old.

Lifetime Ban from Government

Anyone convicted of public corruption crimes is permanently barred from holding any office in government, as well as prevented from doing business within the state.

I♥NY Campaign - Promoting Tourism

The state has committed \$45 million this year to promote tourism across our state, bringing in new visitors and sharing some of the great attractions and scenic destinations New York has to offer. I have also been a long-time supporter of the Sing Sing Historic Prison Museum project to be located in my district. It has tremendous potential to boost economic development and preserve history in the Hudson Valley, as well as New York as a whole.

I have been strongly advocating for the establishment of a Sing Sing Historic Prison Museum similar to Alcatraz to be established in Ossining. Here I am pictured with US Senator Chuck Schumer at a press conference he held to express his strong support for the museum project. Stay in touch with me about Sing Sing Museum to find out more about how it will bring extraordinary economic development and historical relevance to the region.



My Legislative Accomplishments

During the 2014 Legislative Session I actively sponsored many pieces of legislation. The following bills are among the highlights that have passed both houses of the legislature. The status of each piece of legislation is as of August 20, 2014.

A4465-A

This legislation will direct the NYS Department of Health to create a website which will give information on health issues specifically regarding women. The website will detail women's health initiatives to help raise awareness on a number of important issues impacting women.

Passed both houses, not yet delivered to governor.

A5065-A

This bill will simplify the process for voters to obtain an absentee ballot for village elections. This helps preserve the right of all registered voters to vote, even if they are unable to get to their polling place on the day of a village election.

Governor signed on 8/11/2014; Chapter 289

A8224-A

The Bryant Pond Road Bridge stretching across the Taconic State Parkway in Putnam Valley will now be known as the "Disabled American Veterans Memorial Bridge," honoring this group of American Veterans. This will remind the public of the hardships our veterans went through as a result of their service to this nation.

Governor signed on 7/3/2014; Chapter 82

A9330-A

This legislation grants peace officer status to Town of Ossining Court Attendants, if desired. The Town and Village of Ossining consolidated their courts in a cost-savings measure. The legislation would help cut costs by allowing civilian court attendants who have received the appropriate training the legal authority to maintain order in the courtroom.

Passed both houses, not yet delivered to governor.

A 9934-A

The word 'handicapped' often carries a negative connotation. This legislation will remove this word from disability signage. In addition, a new symbol indicating accessibility for those with disabilities will be added to replace the current icon on these signs. These new icons will depict someone in motion rather than staying still. This bill recognizes that people with disabilities are actively engaged community members. As new signs are required, they will include the new language and icon.

Governor signed on 7/25/2014; Chapter 190



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**Legislative Accomplishments
Making Progress in New York**

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I was so proud to be joined by advocates from the Disability Community as well as Senator David Carlucci and Westchester County Legislator Catherine Borgia to celebrate the legislature's passage of a bill to change the language and icon for disability signage.