



Legislative Update

from Assemblymember Ellen Jaffee

SUMMER 2014

Dear Neighbors,

During the 2014 session we passed a budget and legislation that invests in our students, cuts taxes for working families and businesses, creates jobs and boosts our local economy. My advocacy in the Assembly resulted in Rockland's inclusion in the Governor's effort to spur manufacturing growth and attract new businesses to our state by offering manufacturers a tax credit.

While I am disappointed that we did not end the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) to increase school funding or pass the DREAM Act, I am pleased that we committed to investing \$1.5 billion over five years to support the phase in of a statewide full-day Universal Pre-K program.

This newsletter provides more detailed information about what we accomplished during the 2014 legislative session. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and concerns. Visit my Assembly website to sign up for email updates at: <http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/Ellen-Jaffee>. Phone me at 845-624-4601 or email me at jaffee@assembly.state.ny.us.

I hope you are enjoying the summer. Best wishes for a happy and safe Labor Day.

Warmest regards,

Ellen C. Jaffee
NYS Assemblymember, 97th District



Assemblymember Jaffee invited the first grade class from Fleetwood Elementary School, East Ramapo Central School District, Principal Pat Simmons, and teacher Michelle Devaney to tour Blue Hill Farm, learn about local food production, and enjoy a picnic lunch prepared from local ingredients by the Rockland Roots Food Truck.
Photo: Jessica Kesselman

Jaffee Suburban Agriculture Bill Passes Both Houses, Awaits Governor's Signature

Ellen Jaffee, Chair of the Assembly Taskforce on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy, and the Rockland Farm Alliance, hosted a Community Education event at Bluefield Farm in Blauvelt about the Suburban Agriculture Bill she sponsored.

The legislation, (A.8026 / S.6360), which reduces the current required acreage to form an Agricultural District in NY State from 500 to 250 acres, was inspired by Rockland farmers who have been trying to remove barriers to farming in suburban communities and meet the increasing demand for locally grown food.

Protecting suburban farmland increases property values, preserves open space, creates jobs and educational opportunities, while providing locally grown produce to the community and improving the health and quality of life for all.

Steve Rosenberg, Senior Vice-President of Scenic Hudson, said "Passage of the Suburban Agricultural Bill would allow communities to plan smarter and keep productive farmland near urban centers available for farming -- an essential goal of Scenic Hudson's Foodshed Conservation Plan. The bill will also promote new agricultural ventures that attract visitors, provide jobs and boost local economies while simultaneously conserving the natural beauty and health of our communities."

The bill was sponsored in the Senate by Senator David Valesky (D-Oneida).

Jaffee Sponsors Bill to Exclude Teen Income from Childcare Subsidy Calculations

The 2014-15 budget includes Jaffee's bill (A.01077-A), which requires local social services districts to disregard the income of teens under the age of 18 when determining a household's eligibility for childcare subsidies. Ellen Jaffee says, "Children working part time to help their families or to save money for the future will no longer be keeping their families from qualifying for childcare. It is important for the safety of our children and families to ensure reliable, affordable and accessible childcare is available to every family in New York State, regardless of their income."

Jaffee's bill is part of a larger package included in the budget to help alleviate the childcare crisis in the state.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ELLEN JAFFEE

ROCKLAND OFFICE: One Blue Hill Plaza, Box 1549 • Pearl River, NY 10965 • 845-624-4601 • FAX: 845-624-2911
ALBANY OFFICE: 650 Legislative Office Building • Albany, NY 12248 • 518-455-5118 • FAX: 518-455-5119

Email: jaffee@assembly.state.ny.us



Like me on Facebook and follow me on Twitter @ Ellen C. Jaffee



Jaffee's "Boss Bill" Passes Assembly, Bans Discrimination Based on Reproductive Healthcare Decisions

The bill (A. 8769A / S. 6578B), which Jaffee sponsored, would close a glaring loophole in New York's workplace anti-discrimination laws. The bill, sponsored in the Senate by Liz Krueger (D – Manhattan), was prompted by more than 100 federal lawsuits brought by employers seeking to deny their employees the birth control coverage benefits they are guaranteed through their healthcare plans under the federal Affordable Care Act. While this legislation would not directly affect employers' health insurance offerings and covered services, it would prevent discrimination or retaliation against employees for their use of healthcare services and their healthcare decisions, and it would reinforce medical privacy protections for employees.

The bill passed the Assembly with bipartisan support. The Senate did not vote on the bill before the close of session.

Did You Know? The Rockland County Department of Health says, Shop at a local Farmers' Market for fresh produce and more! Call (845) 364-2500 or visit <http://www.rocklandsteps.org/farmers-markets> to learn more. Some markets accept the NYS Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). Some also accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT). Find out if you qualify: WIC participants call (845) 364-2577. For information about Senior Coupons, call (845) 364-2110.

Highlights from the 2014 Legislative Session

Ellen Jaffee Co-Sponsors New 3-Year Moratorium on Fracking

NY State has been under a fracking moratorium since 2008. The most recent moratorium passed the full legislature in 2013 and would have expired in May of 2015. That is why the Assembly overwhelmingly passed (A.5424-B/ S.04236B) sponsored by Assemblymember Robert Sweeney (D-Suffolk), which would ban the controversial drilling practice for an additional three years from the day it is signed into law, allowing more time for the Department of Health and the Department of Environmental Conservation to conclude their respective studies and report to the Governor on the impact of the practice. The Senate did not vote on the bill before session ended.

Women's Equality Act Passes Assembly

For the second consecutive year, the Assembly passed all 10 points of the Women's Equality Act (WEA), which Governor Cuomo first proposed in his 2013 State of the State address. The bill (A.8070) would help provide a path to women's full equality by securing equal pay and fair access to housing, combating employment discrimination, sexual harassment, domestic violence and human trafficking, as well as protecting women's health. Despite polls showing overwhelming support for the full 10-point package, the Senate once again refused to vote on the legislation.

"All 10 points are vital to women in attaining full equality and autonomy over their bodies," Jaffee said. "I am disappointed that the Senate again let down the women of New York."

New York State's outdated law protecting women's reproductive rights was written before the landmark 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade* and does not comply with federal law. The proposed reproductive health component in the 10-point package would bring New York State law up to date with federal law and allow a woman and her doctor to make personal health decisions when necessary to protect her life or health. If federal law were to be overturned, this legislation would guarantee reproductive rights to women in New York State.

To learn more about WEA visit Ellen Jaffee's Assembly website: <http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/Ellen-Jaffee> then click on the WEA icon on the homepage.

Did you know? According to the NYS Community Action Association Rockland County Poverty Profile, Gender & Poverty, median income for men with a high school diploma is \$38,899, while women who have earned a high school diploma make \$25,600.

Ellen Jaffee and the Rockland Community Celebrate Thurgood Marshall Day in Hillburn

On May 17th, Thurgood Marshall Day in New York State, Assemblymember Jaffee and the Rockland County Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. marked the 60th anniversary of Brown V. Board of Education Supreme Court decision, which ended racial segregation in America's public schools. Jaffee wrote the law that designates May 17th as a day to honor Thurgood Marshall, the first African American United States Supreme Court Justice, who has been hailed as one of our Nation's strongest champions for equal rights. In 1943 Marshall stood with a group of African American families and successfully argued for the desegregation of the Main School, now known as the Hillburn School in the Village of Hillburn. Jaffee is working with the community to get historical designation for the site.

Jaffee DXM Law in Effect: Makes Dangerous Over-the-Counter Drugs Illegal for Teens

The law Jaffee authored, prohibiting pharmacies and other retail establishments from selling any products containing Dextromethorphan (DXM) to persons under the age of 18 without a prescription, went into effect in March.

DXM, a non-narcotic cough suppressant that poses serious health risks, is used in more than 100 over-the-counter cough and cold medicines like Robitussin, Sudafed, Tylenol, and Nyquil, as well as generic products. While medicines containing DXM are used safely by millions of Americans each year, taken in large quantities DXM can cause hallucinations, brain damage, seizures and even death.

"Research indicates that abuse of DXM has increased sharply among young people in recent years," Jaffee said. "This law will help protect our children by preventing them from easily purchasing these dangerous, potentially deadly medications." Under the new law (S.696-B / A.933-B), co-sponsored in the Senate by Mark Grisanti (R-Buffalo), any retailer violating the new prohibition will be subject to a fine of \$250 for each violation.



The East Ramapo Marching Band joins Assemblymember Jaffee at Nyack's 6th Annual African American Day Parade.

Ellen Jaffee Gets Fiscal Monitor in East Ramapo

In June the Governor announced his support for the efforts of the State Education Department to install attorney Hank Greenberg as the fiscal monitor for East Ramapo. The announcement comes after years of meetings, conversations and requests from Assemblymembers Ellen Jaffee and Ken Zebrowski (D-New City), concerned parents, teachers, students and government agencies for state intervention in the troubled district. Jaffee said, "I thank the Governor, the Chancellor and the Commissioners for this much needed oversight. While there have been discussions regarding a formula change, immediate state financial oversight is absolutely essential. The devastating cuts to programs that the students and staff have endured are unacceptable."

Hazel N. Dukes, President, New York State Conference NAACP in a letter to Assemblymember Jaffee dated June 16, 2014: "Your leadership in this effort is testimony to your courage, commitment and dedication to children in general and to specific inequities experienced by children attending East Ramapo public Schools. Please accept my indebtedness for your unwavering allegiance to social justice."



Assemblymember Jaffee with South Orangetown Student Spaceflight Experiments Program winners, Olivia Jones, Colm Shalvey, Luke Rabinowitz, and Zachary Visconti at a special Cottage Lane Elementary School assembly to thank her for providing a \$40,000 grant to help fund the program, a National STEAM Education Initiative. Carlee DeFrancesco, a Tappan Zee High School winner is absent.

Ellen Jaffee Helped Win Common Core Reforms in 2014-15 Budget

In February Assemblymembers Ellen Jaffee, Ken Zebrowski, James Skoufis, and Senator David Carlucci hosted a Common Core forum for parents and educators to share their concerns about the rushed implementation of Common Core standards.

Ellen Jaffee said, "While I believe the goals of the Common Core curriculum are worthy, I agree with the overwhelming number of educators and parents, who have been extremely vocal about the flawed implementation of Common Core and its impact on students and teachers. I have serious reservations, as they do, about the storage, use and disclosure of personally identifiable student data and SED's ability to ensure protection of the data. That is why the Assembly passed legislation to slow down the transition to Common Core, reduce stress and anxiety for students, parents and educators, and ensure the program's success."

Reforms include:

- Banning standardized "bubble tests" for students in grades K-2
- Prohibiting Common Core test scores from solely or primarily determining grade promotion and ensuring that the results of the English/Math Common Core tests for grades 3-8 are not used against students and will not appear on permanent records
- Directing SED to provide tools, resources and materials to assist teachers in professional development related to the new standards
- Postponing teacher reviews based on Common Core until the 2015-2016 school year
- Providing for the elimination of inBloom and requiring SED to request that all student information already given to inBloom be deleted



Assemblymember Jaffee and her Chief of Staff, Tiffany Card, serve meals with Jane Halleran of Sparkill at Thorpe Senior Center for the Rockland Meals on Wheels annual "March for Meals."

Ellen Jaffee Speaks Out Against United Water Desal Plant, Rate Hike and Surcharge

Rockland's demand for water has decreased, and yet United Water has asked Rockland ratepayers to subsidize the construction of an unneeded and unapproved desalination plant through a steep rate hike and surcharge that will take more money out of the pockets of hardworking families and business owners.

Testifying at the Public Service Commission hearing in April Jaffee said, "United Water is not acting in the best interest of Rockland ratepayers by asking consumers to bear the cost of an unacceptable record of corporate mismanagement. I will continue to push for a prudence investigation, a forensic audit, and a comprehensive management & operations audit of UWN and its affiliated Management and Services Company. I am confident that the Rockland County Joint Task Force on Water Resources Management will develop a long-term plan that ensures a safe, sustainable water supply for Rockland residents."

Ellen Jaffee Fights for Working Families in 2014 State Budget

This year's fourth consecutive on-time budget helps working families and creates jobs.

Relief for Hardworking Families, Human Service Workers and Older Adults

- Gives our dedicated human service workers a long overdue 2% cost of living adjustment, strengthening the support system in our communities and helping ensure caregivers can give the best possible care to those who need it most.
- Expands the eligibility for the Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Program (EPIC) and Community Services for the Elderly.

Investing in Education and Our Future

- Increases school aid by \$1.5 billion more than 5%, New York's largest recent investment in our children's future.
- Restores \$602 million to Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA)
- Funds statewide full-day Universal Pre-K
- Gives high-needs school districts nearly 70% of the 2014-15 increase helping to ensure that school aid is allocated where it is needed most. East Ramapo saw an increase increase of nearly 12% over the 2013-14 school year.

Cutting Taxes and Creating Jobs

- Establishes 20% property tax credit for manufacturers who own or lease property and lowers the tax rate on income for all manufacturers from the current 5.9% to zero in 2014, attracting new businesses and creating more jobs.
- Includes a 10% upstate film credit, which will directly benefit Rockland County where a variety of TV and film projects have continued to grow.
- Accelerates the phase-out of the 18-a utility surcharge temporary assessment for all customers saving NY businesses and residents, who pay among the highest utility rates in the nation, \$600 million over the next three years.

Matthes Family Thank you

April 2, 2014

Dear Assemblywoman Jaffee,

First and foremost, I must apologize for my delayed expression of gratitude. It is tax season, and I work in a CPA's office, enough said.

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to you and your staff for helping me with the NYS Healthplan Marketplace Exchange. If it were not for all of you, my two children would still be medically uninsured. A good friend suggested that I contact your office with my dilemma, frustration & anxiety, which was one of the smartest ideas ever. Within a week, both of my children received their medical cards. My husband Eric and I were ecstatic and totally relieved. You were all so thoughtful and compassionate. I thank you all again for your help. Cheers to the future of all our healthy children!

Sincerely,

Lisa Mathes, Airmont, NY

Tappan Zee Bridge: Ellen Jaffee Listens to Residents and Business Owners

The Tappan Zee Bridge Project is truly a “design and build” process. Thanks to the leadership of area residents, concerns about their quality of life have been brought to the forefront. I’m listening, talking with them and sharing their concerns with Brian Conybeare, Special Advisor to the Governor, Tappan Zee Bridge Project. We must continue to work together. That’s why I have:

- Held meetings with Grandview residents and state bridge representatives to discuss and share concerns regarding noise and sound barriers on the southwest side of the bridge once the new TZ Bridge is completed

- Walked the properties with South Nyack homeowners to see the changes to the landscape where the new bridge will be built
- Walked the proposed Shared Use Path (SUP) terminus at the corner of Cornelius Avenue and S. Broadway and shared my concerns about the safety of the proposed location urging safer alternatives and designs
- Invited staff to participate in the Piermont Marina meeting with local business owners regarding a safe path in and out of the Marina. A passage has been mapped and designated with Coast Guard- approved markers

Assemblymember Jaffee Brings Foreclosure Unit to Rockland

In June representatives from the New York State Foreclosure Prevention Mobile Unit, Green Path Mortgage Solutions, Legal Aid Society of Rockland County, Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, and Rockland Housing Action Coalition assisted Rockland homeowners, with their concerns about mortgages, payments, interest rates, mortgage modification, foreclosure, and difficulties working with banks and mortgage companies. Ellen Jaffee says, “Helping people avoid foreclosure and stay in their homes is good for them, for their families, for the communities where they live, and for our economy.”



Ellen Jaffee with Tracy Allen, Director of the Finkelstein Memorial Library, at the dedication of new group study rooms funded by a NY State grant she provided.



A delegation from the Haitian community in Rockland County, including Nikita Bernard, Grand Marshall of the Haitian Unity Day Parade in Spring Valley, NY; parade organizers and members of the First Timothy Christian Church in Albany with Assemblymember Jaffee to celebrate Haitian Unity Day in honor of Haiti’s legacy of liberty and justice throughout the world and the countless contributions of New Yorkers of Haitian descent to our Nation and our State.



Legislative Update

from Assemblywoman
Ellen Jaffee

SUMMER 2014

COMMUNITY OFFICE HOURS

Join Ellen Jaffee for ASSEMBLY OFFICE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Every 3rd week of the month, Assemblymember Ellen Jaffee will hold local community office hours to answer questions and hear concerns from constituents.

August 20, 2014

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Spring Valley Farmers’ Market
Memorial Park, Spring Valley, NY

August 20, 2014

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM
Latin Star Restaurant
302 N. Main St., Spring Valley, NY

September 20, 2014

2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
9W Market, 243 Rte. 9W, Palisades, NY

September 21, 2014

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Piermont Farmers’ Market
M & T Bank Parking Lot, Piermont, NY

October 18, 2014

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Suffern Farmers’ Market
Parking lot A bottom Lafayette, Suffern, NY

November 18, 2014

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Nyack Farmers’ Market
Riverspace Parking Lot, Nyack, NY

Keep an eye on Facebook and Twitter for Ellen in your neighborhood!