



Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe that 2015 will be coming to an end. We'll soon be heading into a new year and a new legislative session that begins on January 6. The Governor will deliver his [State of the State and Executive Budget](#) address on January 13. I have been meeting with a variety of advocates to discuss their concerns as we develop our state budget. I welcome your comments, so I can convey them to my colleagues, the Speaker and the Governor in Albany.

Wishing you safe, happy holidays and a healthy, fruitful 2016!

~Ellen~

East Ramapo Monitor Team Report



I was at the Board of Regents meeting when the Monitor Team presented its [comprehensive report](#) with 19 specific recommendations including a Monitor with veto power and additional funding that will lead East Ramapo to fiscal stability and restore much-needed programs and services to the students. I am energized and prepared to develop legislation that will implement these recommendations. [We have turned a corner.](#)

Public School Advocates came to Albany joining Assemblymember Zebrowski and me for the Regents meeting.



Assemblymember Zebrowski and I spent an evening with Padres Unidos, public school advocates representing the many Spanish speaking families who attend the East Ramapo schools. My support for override legislation has always been about the students in East Ramapo receiving the quality education they so rightly deserve.

Public Service Commission Rules: No Desal Plant

I applaud the PSC for its [decision to shut down](#) an expensive and unsustainable water supply project Rockland doesn't need. I am proud to have partnered with the Rockland Water Coalition, the Water Taskforce, and the community who worked tirelessly to find alternatives like conserving water and requiring United Water, now Suez, to fix its leaking pipes. As the PSC noted, "Rockland County might become famous for new and innovative solutions."

REDC 21st Annual Awards

Congratulations to the Mid-Hudson Valley recipients who were awarded a total of \$90.4 million dollars. The 21st annual Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Awards were given to those who "demonstrated a commitment to Rockland's economic vitality and significantly enhanced our local business climate." For a complete list, click [here](#).



Children and Families Committee Hearing



As a member of the Children and Families Committee, I attended the hearing on Child-Care Assistance for Low-Income Families. Child-Care subsidies provide low-income families with access to quality child care so that families can work and be self-sufficient. The federal block grant was [re-authorized](#) with significant policy changes to the program, including amending the health and safety requirements for child care providers, establishing more family-friendly guidelines for eligibility policies, and enhancing parents' access to information regarding options for available child care providers. There is an anticipated increase in costs to providers to implement quality and training components of the block grant reauthorization. The purpose of the hearing was to examine the use of child care subsidies authorized by the SFY 2015-16 budgets in the context of the federal reauthorization of the block grant.

Child Care Resources Meeting

I met with Jane Brown, Executive Director of Child Care Resources of Rockland, who is a member of the [Early Care Learning Council for the State](#) and other child-care advocates. We discussed 2016 legislative priorities for early childhood, including child care, early intervention, and pre-school/pre-k funding as well as increasing our investment in childcare and childcare subsidies. Among my top priorities are changing the reimbursement formula for the older pre-k programs, creating a universal funding system among all pre-k programs in the state and maintaining the existing pre-k programs by funding them at a rate that would enable them to meet the new state requirements and provide a quality program.



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