



Assemblywoman **Aileen M. Gunther**

Fall 2014

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Dear Friend,

Thank you for the privilege of representing you in the New York State Assembly. I work hard to make sure that your voice is heard in Albany and your needs are met at home.

During this legislative session, state spending was held to less than a two percent increase for the fourth consecutive year. School aid was increased by over \$1 billion and, for the first time in 14 years, funding was increased for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) for college students. There is still more work to be done, and I am ready to return to Albany in January to keep fighting for you.

Every day, constituents, like you, call my office for help with everything from health insurance to housing and child care to college scholarships. Please feel free to use my office as a resource if you have any questions or need assistance. My door is always open.

Sincerely,

Aileen Gunther
Member of Assembly



Budget Highlights

This year's budget included some tax and mandate relief measures that I fought hard for. Here are some highlights:

- Cut the middle class income tax rate to the lowest in 60 years
- Lowered the business tax rate to the lowest level since 1968
- Accelerated the phase-out of the State's energy tax, saving taxpayers \$200 million annually
- Provided property tax rebate checks to homeowners across the State
- Cut the income tax rate for manufacturers to 0% to attract more jobs to New York

Providing mandate relief to school districts

This year, I sponsored legislation to eliminate the unnecessary and costly Annual Visual Inspection requirement for schools. Eliminating this mandate will save taxpayers and school districts thousands of dollars each year. The bill passed both houses of the Legislature and is awaiting the Governor's signature.



Keeping our communities safe

As a mother and a grandmother, keeping our families and communities safe is one of my top priorities. That's why I sponsored legislation that has now become law to allow volunteer fire companies to prohibit membership to convicted sex offenders.

I also sponsored a bill which passed both houses of the legislature that would close a loophole in the New York State Sex Offender Registry (A6074-A). Currently, if a sex offender has committed more than two crimes, only the most recent two convictions would be displayed on the registry. This leaves open the possibility that an offender could have committed a more serious crime than those that are shown.

To search the New York State Sex Offender Registry, please visit criminaljustice.ny.gov/nsor/ or call 1-800-262-3257.



Combating heroin and opioid abuse



We all know how heroin and opioid abuse is ravaging our communities. This year, the Legislature fought back with a package of legislation to curb this epidemic and increase access to treatment.

I sponsored a bill which requires the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) to provide services to adolescents and adults for up to nine months after the completion of a treatment program. These wrap-around services will help support a person's recovery and reduce the chance of relapse.

Other bills I supported include requiring insurance companies to cover addiction treatment services, expanding public education campaigns to prevent opioid and heroin use, and creating new penalties to help crack down on illegal drug distribution.

If you or someone you know is in need of treatment for addiction, please call OASAS at 518-473-3460.



Education Highlights

- Increased aid to schools by over \$1 billion
- Fought to phase-out the Gap Elimination Adjustment
- Increased funding to the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) for the first time in 14 years
- Funded community colleges with an additional \$20.2 million
- Banned standardized testing for students in grades K-2
- Created a "Parents Bill of Rights" that places limitations on sharing student data with third-party vendors
- Directed the State Education Department to provide tools, resources and materials to teachers so that they have everything they need to best educate our children

STEM Scholarship

The Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) scholarship provides a full SUNY or CUNY tuition scholarship to the top ten percent of students in New York high schools if they major in a STEM field and work in a STEM job in New York for five years after graduation.

For more information, please call 1-888-697-4372.



New York State Assembly
Albany, New York 12248



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Reports to the People

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529 College Savings Program

Single taxpayers in New York can deduct up to \$5,000 and married couples can deduct \$10,000 on contributions made to the 529 College Savings Program for their child's college expenses. People wishing to start a college savings account for their children can start an account for just \$25.

For more information, please call 1-877-697-2837.

