

Around the Community



Assemblyman Braunstein is pictured with Madison and Maximus Wong from PS 107, whose school donated to Assemblyman Braunstein's 7th Annual Holiday Toy Drive.



Congratulations to the winners of Assemblyman Braunstein's Annual Halloween Essay and Drawing Contest. Assemblyman Braunstein is pictured (L-R) with Olivia Tran of PS 159, Isabel Lin of PS 41, Annette Mary Ajai of PS 115, and Ming Jia of PS 221.



Assemblyman Braunstein was honored with a Kiwanis Certificate of Appreciation and Kiwanis Pin at the Kiwanis of Bayside's Annual Flapjack Fundraiser.



Assemblyman Braunstein, along with students and faculty from Benjamin N. Cardozo High School, delivered donations from his 7th Annual Holiday Veterans' Gift Drive to the St. Albans VA Community Living Center.

Assemblyman Edward C. Braunstein

DISTRICT OFFICE: 213-33 39th Avenue, Suite 238 • Bayside, NY 11361 • 718-357-3588 • Fax: 718-357-5947
ALBANY OFFICE: Room 557 Legislative Office Building • Albany, NY 12248 • 518-455-5425 • Fax: 518-455-4648
EMAIL: braunsteine@nyassembly.gov

ASSEMBLYMAN BRAUNSTEIN: STATE

Assemblyman Braunstein announced that he helped pass a \$168.3 billion 2018-19 state budget that includes a nearly \$1 billion increase in education funding, invests in transportation repairs, protects New Yorkers from federal tax changes, and supports senior citizens. “Because of a sizable budget deficit,

we had to make some tough decisions. But we fought hard for a one-time balanced budget that stays true to our New York values while holding spending growth to 2% or less for the 8th year in a row,” said Assemblyman Braunstein.

Investing in public education

The budget builds on the Assembly’s commitment to ensuring every New York student receives a quality education by providing a total of \$26.6 billion in education funding. That’s an increase of \$914 million – or 3.6 percent – over the previous year and a 36 percent increase since 2012.

“A quality education is the most important asset we can provide to our children,” said Assemblyman Braunstein. “Our students deserve to learn not only how to read and write, but also how to think critically and creatively. The state budget ensures every student has those opportunities.”



Assemblyman Braunstein attended the World Journalism Preparatory School’s Student Government Inauguration.

Implementing the Excelsior Scholarship, supporting state colleges and universities

A college degree is increasingly vital to landing a good-paying job and securing a middle-class living. Unfortunately, rising costs have left far too many New York families unable to pay for higher education. To address this affordability crisis and help level the playing field, the budget invests \$7.6 billion in higher education, an increase of \$1.2 billion – or 25 percent – since 2012.

The budget plan allocates \$118 million to support the approximately 27,000 students in the Excelsior Scholarship program, which makes SUNY and CUNY schools tuition-free for New Yorkers who earn less than \$110,000 this year. When fully phased in, the program will enable more than half of all full-time students at public colleges and universities to attend school tuition-free.

“The cost of higher education grows larger every year, preventing many New Yorkers from achieving their college dreams,” said Assemblyman Braunstein. “The budget provides substantial funding for state schools and the Excelsior Scholarship program because a student’s ability to pay should never determine when their educational journey ends.”

Funding the MTA Subway Action Plan

Millions of New Yorkers rely on bus, rail, and subway services to get around the city, but conditions have become a nightmare. The budget fully funds the Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s Subway Action Plan – for a total of \$836 million – to make emergency repairs and enhance subway performance. “We have to do everything in our power to make traveling in New York easier,” said Assemblyman Braunstein. “This budget helps get us there.”

The plan also creates a \$50 million annual outer borough transit fund, which will be dedicated to funding transit upgrades in Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Staten Island. “I am proud to join my colleagues in securing this new outer borough transit funding,” said Assemblyman Braunstein. “With this new funding, we aim to improve transit options in Northeast Queens.”



Assemblyman Braunstein attended the Center for the Women of New York’s annual holiday party.

Supporting seniors’ health and well-being

The budget restores \$8.16 million to support long-term care. It also restores \$7.81 million to preserve spousal refusal, ensuring couples do not lose their life savings in the event a spouse becomes ill and needs nursing home care, and rejects the proposal to limit the amount of resources a community spouse is allowed to retain.

“The decision to move a spouse to a long-term care facility is never an easy one,” said Assemblyman Braunstein. “When that choice is made, no one should be forced to give up their economic security to ensure their loved one gets the care they need. For seniors living on a fixed income, this program is vital because the costs of long-term care can be financially draining.”

The spending plan invests \$2 million in Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs). NORCs provide services to help participants, including healthcare management planning, case assistance, benefit application assistance, linking residents with in-home and prevention services, healthcare screenings and other services. The budget funds a number of programs that provide important

BUDGET MOVES NEW YORK FORWARD

resources for seniors, including \$31.2 million for the Community Services for the Elderly program which supports personal care, home delivered meals, transportation, senior centers and other important services.

“Seniors have built their lives in our neighborhoods and play an integral role in helping them grow vibrant,” said Assemblyman Braunstein. “This year’s budget helps elderly Northeast Queens residents remain in their homes and continue to be a part of our communities.”

Assemblyman Braunstein: New York State bans guns from domestic violence abusers

Assemblyman Braunstein announced that he helped pass the Domestic Violence Escalation Prevention Act as part of the Assembly’s continued efforts to keep guns out of the wrong hands and prevent gun violence in New York. The measure prohibits an individual who has been convicted of a domestic violence crime from purchasing or possessing a firearm.

“More than half of all female homicide victims in the United States are murdered by an intimate partner, with nearly three women killed every day. One step in preventing further tragedies is ensuring that their abusers don’t have a gun,” said Assemblyman Braunstein.

The law also establishes a clear process for notifying the FBI of domestic violence convictions for the purpose of identifying individuals prohibited from purchasing or possessing firearms when a background check is conducted; prevents individuals with an outstanding warrant for a felony or serious offense crime, including a domestic violence misdemeanor, from being eligible for a firearms license; and creates a new requirement that the court order the surrender of all firearms following a conviction of a felony or serious offense, including domestic violence misdemeanors.

“Despite tragedy after tragedy, the federal government refuses to take action to protect Americans from gun violence. From mass shootings to the far-too-routine violence that plagues neighborhoods and leaves families scared to walk the streets, we need to do more,” said Assemblyman Braunstein. “Thoughts and prayers will never be enough – they will not bring victims back and they will not keep guns out of the hands of dangerous individuals. I’ll continue to take real action to keep our families and kids safe and to save lives.”

Protecting New Yorkers from federal tax changes

The state budget includes measures designed to blunt the impact of the federal tax plan, which increases taxes on many middle-class families by restricting state and local tax deductibility.

One measure creates state-operated charitable contribution funds designed to help improve health care and educational outcomes for all New Yorkers. Taxpayers who donate to the funds can claim these contributions as deductions on their state and federal tax returns, as well as claim a state tax credit equal to 85 percent of the donation amount. The budget also creates a new Employer Compensation Expense Tax (ECET) that employers would have the option of participating in. The ECET is a 5 percent tax on all annual payroll expenses in excess of \$40,000 per employee, and would be phased in over a three-year period. The new tax would cut personal income taxes on earnings and a new tax credit would ensure that employees subject to the ECET do not see a decrease in take-home pay.

“The new federal tax law raises taxes on many hardworking families, threatening their economic future,” said Assemblyman Braunstein. “The budget includes measures to limit the law’s impact and protect New Yorkers from its devastating effects.”

Tax cuts for middle-class families

The budget also continues phasing in middle-class tax cuts, which are projected to save families \$4.2 billion annually by 2025. The plan reduces the state income tax rate from 6.45 to 5.5 percent for those earning between \$40,000 and \$150,000 and from 6.65 to 6 percent for those who earn between \$150,000 and \$300,000. Families will see average savings of \$250 this year and, when they’re fully phased in, 6 million New Yorkers will save \$700 each year.

“Saving for the future can be an uphill battle when more and more families are struggling just to make ends meet,” said Assemblyman Braunstein. “These families deserve a break, which is why this year’s budget continues these vital tax cuts.”



Assemblyman Braunstein, along with students and faculty from Benjamin N. Cardozo High School, dropped off donations from our community’s 22nd Annual Valentines for Vets Gift Drive to the New York State Veterans’ Home in St. Albans.



Assemblyman Braunstein visited the House of Sharing, a Shelter for Comfort Women victims in Korea.

Dear Neighbor:

This newsletter highlights the actions I have been taking in our district and in Albany on behalf of our community. If you would like to sign up for my email list to receive more frequent updates, please email me at braunsteine@nyassembly.gov.

As always, my office is available to assist you. If you are having trouble with state or local government issues, please do not hesitate to contact us. My staff and I are always here to help you obtain benefits, provide information on government programs, and develop legislative solutions to community problems.



*Edward C. Braunstein
Member of Assembly, 26th District*

New York State Assembly • Albany, New York 12248

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



Assemblyman
**Edward C.
Braunstein**
Reports to the People

SPRING 2018



Assemblyman Braunstein attended the Glen Oaks Volunteer Ambulance Corps (GOVAC) Ambulance Dedication Ceremony. Assemblyman Braunstein provided a \$125,000 grant to GOVAC for the new ambulance.



Assemblyman Braunstein met with Sacred Heart Girl Scout Troop 4022 at his District Office.