



Assemblyman **Andrew Hevesi**

Reports to the People

WINTER 2010

Dear Neighbor,

As we enjoy this holiday season, it is important that we remember those in our community who are struggling. Between a slowly recovering local economy and the catastrophic tornados that hit our borough, this past year has been a trying one for many in our community. It is with this in mind that I ask everyone to remember to continue to support their neighbors during these frustrating and difficult times.

The night of the Queens borough tornado and microburst is one that will not soon be forgotten. It was in the fallout of this disaster that great leadership and communal strength was shown. We will all remember the devastation that was inflicted as we helped clean the ravaged streets alongside fellow neighbors and community leaders. With many other elected officials, I called upon Governor Paterson to declare the community a disaster area in order to secure FEMA funding. The president subsequently approved funding for the rehabilitation of our public areas damaged by the storm. One positive outcome of this disaster was the support neighbors showed toward one another in the fallout. The resilience and optimism of our community was apparent and makes me so proud to have the opportunity to represent you.

In this newsletter, you will find information about what I have done over the past year, as well as issues I hope to address in the coming legislative session. I ask you to contact my office at any time if you have feedback or problems. With your response, I am better able to serve your needs.

I would like to wish you safe and happy holidays, and I look forward to a productive new year.

Sincerely

Andrew Hevesi



Assemblyman Hevesi helps distribute kosher meals at Masbia in Rego Park.

The holidays are a time for friends, family, and giving. In this economy, where so many are struggling to make ends meet, I would ask that you consider donating food, clothing, or coats to your local food pantry if you are able. Many of our local pantries in Queens have been experiencing cuts in donations and shortages of food while also seeing an increase in demand for services. To find the pantry nearest you, please call my office at 718-263-5595 for assistance.

ASSEMBLYMAN HEVESI EXPLAINS WHY HE VOTED TO PLACE A MORATORIUM ON HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

There have been many discussions regarding hydrofracking, its potential benefits, and the potential side effects associated with this process. A number of elected officials have publicly weighed the pros and cons in this major debate. In this article, I will outline what hydrofracking is, how it works, the possible benefits, and potential consequences of this proposal.

The term hydrofracking refers to a practice called hydraulic fracturing. This process results in the creation of fractures in rocks, the goal of which is to increase the output of a well. The technique of hydraulic fracturing is used to increase or restore the rate at which fluids, such as oil, gas, or water, can be procured from a reservoir, including unconventional reservoirs such as shale rock or coal beds.

The current debate revolves around a proposal to begin hydrofracking the Marcellus Shale in upstate New York. The Marcellus Shale is a black shale formation extending deep underground from Ohio and West Virginia northeast into Pennsylvania and southern New York. Although the Marcellus Shale is exposed at the ground surface in some locations in the northern Finger Lakes area, it is as deep as 7,000 feet or more below the ground surface along the Pennsylvania border in the Delaware River Valley. Recent discoveries have uncovered an abundance of natural gas underneath the Shale.

Proponents of hydrofracking argue that the ability to hydrofrack for natural gas in the Marcellus Shale would help decrease our dependence on foreign energy sources and lower gas prices. Advocates also argue that this enterprise would create many job opportunities upstate, thus giving our upstate economy a much needed boost. However, there may be serious drawbacks to hydrofracking that would affect the quality of life in New York City. This includes the possible contamination of ground and drinking water. The New York City water reservoir is located dangerously close to the Marcellus Shale and the proposed hydrofracking operation. Additionally, air quality, the migration of gases and hydraulic fracturing chemicals to the surface, and the potential mishandling of waste are areas of substantial concern.

Gas drilling also carries with it risks of accidents, including blow-outs and hazards related to gas seeping from wells. There are also potential effects on the communities in which shale gas production is located, including traffic, and noise. The potential costs associated with possible environmental clean-up processes, which will cost billions of dollars for filtration plants, loss of land value, and human and animal health concerns are currently undetermined.

The danger that hydrofracking would present to our community is the reason I voted to extend the moratorium on hydrofracking. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is currently conducting a study on hydrofracking of the Marcellus Shale, the benefits, and the risks involved. As we move forward, the New York State government will continue to research and investigate the possible effects of hydrofracking on the state and city and our community. This moratorium provides the DEC with the necessary time to complete a thorough review of the proposal before the state takes any further action.



Assemblyman Hevesi speaks at Congregation Machane Chodosh's ambulance dedication ceremony.



Assemblyman Hevesi attends a local press conference held by the New York City Office of Emergency Management regarding the tornado that struck Queens on September 16, 2010.



Assemblyman Hevesi, Councilwoman Koslowitz, and Senator Stavisky present awards to Forest Hills High School Principal Saul Gootnick for the school's achievement of an "A" rating in the 2010 NYC DOE Progress Reports.

ASSEMBLYMAN HEVESI HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED FOR ANTI-BULLYING MEASURES IN NYC SCHOOLS

Recent media coverage of youth suicides brought about by bullying has highlighted the need for us as a community to address this issue in our schools. Bullying in schools is not a rite of passage, nor is it a test of a youth's character. Bullying is both unnecessary and preventable and has the potential of inducing lasting physical and physiological harm on our children.

According to a study conducted by the New York City Department of Education during the 2008-2009 school year, roughly 130,000 instances of bullying were reported in New York City public schools. Of these reported instances, 6,658 were based upon a discriminatory bias. Gender and racial bias were the top reasons for bias bullying followed by sexual orientation. These figures are not only upsetting, but could be significantly reduced if this issue is given the attention it deserves.

The youth of New York City have a right to attend their schools without fear of harassment. Bullying creates counterproductive classrooms that stifle ideas and learning. Parents should have the comfort of knowing that their children are being educated in a safe and tolerant environment. With this problem in mind, Assemblyman Hevesi will be visiting and speaking out against bullying in local public schools early next year. The Assemblyman also encourages parents to begin a dialogue with their children about the realities of bullying and the need for tolerance.



Assemblyman Hevesi attends the ground-breaking of the Kew Gardens Interchange site.



HELP AVAILABLE FOR HIGH WINTER HEATING COSTS: APPLY FOR HEAP ASSISTANCE NOW

With home heating costs expected to rise this winter, people who pay a large portion of their income for heat should be aware that help is available. The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is a federally funded program that assists eligible households in meeting their home energy needs.

New York's benefit program is structured in such a way that higher benefits are provided to those households that have a large percentage of their income dedicated to energy costs, contain a vulnerable individual, or have the lowest income.

To qualify for assistance, you must meet several criteria. First, you must meet the income requirement and be either 60 or older, be head of household receiving social security disability, or live either alone or with a spouse and receive SSI code A. You must also live in an eligible housing situation. This generally means that you either pay directly for heating costs or must pay rent with heating costs included. If you live in subsidized housing, you must pay heating costs separately from your rent. Individual applicants must also be U.S. citizens or qualified aliens.

Eligible households that pay directly for gas heat can receive a benefit amount of up to \$400. Eligible households that pay directly for oil heat can receive a benefit amount of up to \$600. Eligible households that do not pay directly for heat receive a standard statewide benefit of either \$40 or \$50, depending on income level.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	MONTHLY INCOME LIMITS
1	\$2,030
2	\$2,657
3	\$3,279
4	\$3,903

The Home Energy Assistance Program enrollment began on November 1, 2010. Those eligible for benefits must apply using a special HEAP application available in our district office. Please contact my district office at (718) 263-5595 to apply immediately.

Assemblyman Hevesi attends the Middle Village Veterans' Day Parade with Pat Toro, President of Vietnam Veterans of America Queens Chapter 32, Assemblyman Mike Miller, and Senator Joseph Addabbo.

SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES

Here are some examples of issues my office has been able to address on behalf of our neighbors:

- **Assisted** a constituent who has lived in his apartment with his family for over sixty years stave off eviction due to a rent increase by helping him apply and receive the Senior Citizen Rent Exemption Increase.
- **Assisted** a constituent who had been out of work for two years receive acceptance into a food stamps program after they had applied and not received a response for several months.
- **Helped** a constituent get the bus route her special needs children use reinstated to its original schedule after it was changed by the bus company, which will allow her to spend more time with the children in the morning and reach work on time.
- **Assisted** a constituent in getting her teacher license background check expedited after a year of waiting and under the threat of being deported when her student visa expired.
- **Helped** a constituent work with the MTA to receive a new disability reduced MetroCard with the correct balance after losing the card on the subway.

LEGISLATIVE E-MAIL PROGRAM

In addition to my office's existing programs, I ask you to continue to take advantage of our Legislative E-mail program - the easiest way to interact with myself and my staff regarding policy in New York State. Thousands of our community's residents receive these e-mails, request additional bill information, and register their support or opposition to legislation. Simply put, my Legislative E-mail Program allows me to gain your insight and valuable input on pending legislation. If you would like to participate, please contact my office at hevesia@assembly.state.ny.us.



Assemblyman Hevesi cuts the ribbon of the new playground he helped fund at PS 144 in Forest Hills with Senator Toby Stavisky, District Leader Melinda Katz, and Community Board Six District Manager Frank Gulluscio.



Assemblyman Hevesi is joined by elected officials in Albany to present a proclamation to leaders of the Russian community.



ASSEMBLYMAN ANDREW HEVESI

DISTRICT OFFICE:

70-50 Austin Street, Suite 110, Forest Hills, NY 11375 • 718-263-5595

ALBANY OFFICE:

Room 833, LOB, Albany, NY 12248 • 518-455-4926

E-MAIL:

hevesia@assembly.state.ny.us