



## Assemblyman **Andrew Hevesi**

Reports to the People

WINTER 2011

*Dear Neighbor,*

*School bullying has become a persistent and serious issue facing our children. During the 2009-2010 school year in New York City, there were 141,030 documented bullying cases. This figure translates into 1 in every 10 students reporting being bullied each year. Unfortunately, many more cases go unreported. The lack of attention to this issue can be attributed to other overshadowing concerns including overwhelming student enrollment figures, declines in resources, and the overall daunting educational challenges facing our respective institutions. To begin shedding light on this problem, I recently had the privilege of presenting a New York City Police Department program aimed at curbing bullying to a number of local schools.*

*The NYPD anti-bullying program is an interactive socio-drama performed by officers from the NYPD Community Outreach Division that covers a broad array of topics. The performance allows students to engage with the officers as they act out various scenarios that students may encounter when being bullied. Physical and verbal intimidation, cyber-harassment, and the serious consequences that result from bullying are all covered during the presentation. The officers make a point of encouraging students to speak up when they see bullying, to both teachers and parents. While I am encouraged by the message and response to this NYPD anti-bullying program, more must be done. The severity of the impact bullying has on our schools and children is costing us more than is apparent and cannot be tolerated.*

*Our children are growing up in a society that is wired to technology. The opportunities for bullies to torment their victims have become constant and potentially endless. Text messaging, online social networks, and the easy accessibility to photo and video recording on cell phones have developed into a new type of bullying known as cyber-bullying. This development means that the taunting can surround the student at school, at home, and anywhere they go in between. This constant, unfair, and often brutal burden placed on a child can cause anxiety, health problems, social isolation, attendance issues, poor educational achievement and at its worst, self-inflicted physical harm or worse.*

*As a parent of a young child, I ask you to join me in identifying and protecting our children from bullying through awareness and the promotion of open dialogue. Empowerment is essential to overcoming bullying. Young people must not feel ashamed or scared to talk about harassment they are facing at school. Thank you for joining me in this crucial endeavor to protect our children.*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew Hevesi".

Andrew Hevesi  
28<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi stands with Assistant Principal Jennifer Lucadamo, Parent Coordinator Siobhan Kyne, and NYPD Officers from the School Safety Division after an anti-bullying socio-drama presentation at a local public school.



*Assemblyman Hevesi, Council Member Koslowitz, and Senator Stavisky stand with community affairs officers from the 112<sup>th</sup> NYPD Precinct and attendees of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bi-Annual Jewish Leadership Breakfast.*

## Home Energy Assistance Program

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.

### 2011-2012 HEAP Benefit Gross Monthly Income Guidelines

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	\$2,146
2	\$2,806
3	\$3,466
4	\$4,127

Each additional Add \$478

The Home Energy Assistance Program enrollment began on November 16, 2011. 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.

## 2012 Food Drive



My office will begin collecting canned, non-perishable, food goods beginning on Tuesday, January 3, 2012 and will continue to do so for the next year. Though food contributions are greatly appreciated during the holidays, many local food banks find themselves scarce on supplies throughout the rest of the year. I hope to alleviate this problem by helping to provide a continuous flow of donations year round. All food collected will be periodically distributed to local food banks and homeless shelters. I am encouraging members of the community to stop by with whatever canned goods they are able to spare to contribute to the program. When dropping off your contributions, my office staff, as always, will be available to sit and speak with you about any community or policy based issues or concerns you may have.

## A Feat for Pedestrian Safety on Queens Boulevard

Earlier this year, the Department of Transportation (DOT) began to install pedestrian countdown signals at every intersection along Queens Boulevard. The installation of these signals was one of the major initiatives announced last year when DOT released the Pedestrian Safety Study and Action Plan. The study was based on an examination of over 7,000 crashes which caused serious injuries or fatalities to pedestrians while identifying underlying causes. The analysis found that serious pedestrian crashes are about two-thirds deadlier on major street corridors like Queens Boulevard. These new crosswalk signals which display LED numbers that count down the number of seconds remaining before the "flashing hand" turns solid red, will help prevent pedestrians from getting caught in the middle of wider intersections.

## Hevesi Co-Chairs Hearing to Evaluate Law Governing Interstate Wine Sales

On October 25th, 2011 Assemblyman Hevesi co-chaired a hearing as Chair of the Assembly Oversight, Analysis, and Investigations Committee to review the State Liquor Authority's implementation of out-of-state direct wine shipment provisions and the impact of such requirements on New York State. The New York wine and grape industry accounts for approximately \$3.6 billion dollars of the economic activity in the state each year. Nearly 1,400 vineyards in the state have increased production more than fifty percent over the last twenty years making New York the third largest wine producing state in the country behind California and Washington. The hearing, co-chaired by Assemblyman Robin Schimminger, Chairman of the Committee on Economic Development, Job Creation, Commerce and Industry, was focused on a 2005 law that established a framework for the direct shipment of wine to consumers between states. That 2005 law required that out-of-state wine manufacturers shipping into New York State be licensed through the State Liquor Authority and ensure that certain fair practices are adhered to. Some of the requirements include all wine directly shipped to New York consumers are subject to the payment of all state and local sales taxes, that the SLA only approves permits from wineries in other states that have favorable and similar rules as in New York State, and that precautions are taken so wine is not shipped to minors.

The hearing focused on the in-state and out-of-state licensee's compliance with the law, the law's impact on licensing fees, and state and local sales taxes that are gained from interstate and intrastate wine shipments. Special attention was paid to functional reciprocal agreements which are an important aspect in ensuring that New York wineries remain competitive in direct interstate shipments. Functional reciprocal agreements set the same standards and practices in which wineries can directly ship to out-of-state consumers. Currently, 38 states allow some form of direct shipment. Of these, wineries in 15 states currently ship to New York consumers, and those wineries, at the present time, number 839. These agreements ensure a level playing field for New York wineries, which means jobs for New Yorkers, increased tourism for the state, and will enable the State to continue to be one of the largest wine producers in the country.



*Assemblyman Hevesi, along with 112th Precinct Community Council President Heidi Chain and members of the local police, speaks to attendees about the hard work and dedication of our police officers at the Forest Hills National Night Out Against Crime.*

## Clean Heating Fuel Tax Credit

Thanks to a law passed by Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi this year, an existing tax credit on clean home heating oil will not expire as home heating oil prices are projected to rise this winter. The law, signed by Governor Andrew Cuomo on October 14, 2011, extends the Clean Heating Fuel Credit until January 1, 2017.

With this credit set to expire at the end of this year and the New York State Research and Development Authority projecting a 30% rise in cost this season, Assemblyman Hevesi felt that it was necessary to ensure the continuation of this tax credit. The loss of this credit in the middle of the home heating oil season would have been devastating to New York State consumers. Currently, consumers purchase home heating oil in one of two ways: at the daily market price the day they run out of oil, or through a fixed long term price contract set at the beginning of the home heating oil season for the duration of the season. Generally, in anticipation of the home heating oil season, oil companies forecast the oil market for the winter months to set a fixed monthly heating oil price. The loss of this credit, which was set to expire in the middle of the season, would have complicated setting fixed heating oil price contracts. As a result, for most consumers who generally purchase oil through fixed contracts at the beginning of the season, the loss of this credit would have dramatically increased the cost of home heating oil over the duration of the heating season. The extension of this credit protects consumers from spiking oil prices when they need it most to heat their homes.



*Assemblyman Hevesi joins Senator Tony Avella and Council Member Jim Gennaro at the Queens Civic Congress Environmental Roundtable to discuss sustainability issues concerning the borough.*



## Serving Our Communities

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

- Assisted a constituent in obtaining a full reimbursement for a warranty they had paid several hundreds of dollars for that was not honored when their air conditioner malfunctioned during last summer's heat wave.
- Assisted in expediting a constituent's Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) after they received notice of being removed from the program in error and were told they would have to pay back over \$4000 in back rent.
- Helped expedite an insurance claim for a constituent, whose vehicle was involved in a major accident, after not hearing from their insurance company for several months.
- Assisted a constituent by contacting the Department of Health and having a health inspector review their neighborhood regarding the issue of nuisance animals, specifically the abundance of pigeons that were congregating in the area of their home.
- Assisted constituent in obtaining information and paperwork on how to become a certified Small Business Enterprise with the State of New York and the Federal government.

### Legislative E-mail Program

In addition to my office's existing programs, I ask you 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](mailto:hevesia@assembly.state.ny.us).



*In early Fall, Assemblyman Hevesi joined members of the Glendale Civic Association, Civics United for Railroad Environmental Solutions (CURES), and the community to clean up Edsall Avenue. This cleanup, one of several, was aimed at removing trash and overgrown vegetation from the avenue which runs adjacent to the rail corridor in Glendale.*

### Internships Available

Assemblyman Hevesi's district office is seeking interns for the Spring semester. Internships provide a great opportunity for high school and college students to experience first hand the dynamics of a legislative office. Interns will be responsible for helping assist in constituent cases, doing legislative research,

and aiding in the communications efforts of the district office. Interested candidates can fax or email a resume and cover letter detailing their interest to (718) 263-5688 or [hevesia@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:hevesia@assembly.state.ny.us). If you would like more information you can contact the district office at (718) 263-5595.



## ASSEMBLYMAN ANDREW HEVESI

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