



Assemblyman

Andrew Hevesi



Winter 2014

Dear Neighbor,

As this year comes to a close, I would like to wish you and your family a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season. I am honored to continue to serve as your elected representative in the New York State Assembly. It is a privilege to be allowed to represent our community, and I look forward to continuing to work on our behalf. The articles in this newsletter contain some examples of recent actions taken by myself and my staff while also highlighting several goals we are currently pursuing.

Over the last several months as the Chair of the Oversight, Analysis and Investigation's Committee, I had the opportunity to co-host two roundtables on Child Protective Services and a hearing focused on homeless services in the state of New York. The roundtables focused on best practices for the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), and provided a comprehensive breakdown of how our state's system operates to protect our children from neglect and abuse. The public hearing on homeless services focused on how local social services districts address the problem of homelessness, as well as the state funding streams currently being used. These events provided crucial information that will assist in policy making decisions during the upcoming 2015 legislative session.

My office and I were able to hold several events here in our neighborhood. Due to the success of the last two electronic events we held, my office co-hosted a third recycling event and collected over nine-thousand pounds of electronics. We were also able to hold a Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) information session, which allowed seniors to voice questions they had directly to the NYC Department of Finance, the agency in charge of operating the program. Additionally, we co-hosted a V.I.N. etching event where the community was able to bring specific items in order to receive a unique personal identification number for them. All these events were a great success, and I would like to thank the sponsors and agencies who helped make them possible.

As always, my staff and I are available to assist with any issues or concerns that you may have. Please feel free to stop by or call us at 718-263-5595. If you are interested in signing up for our legislative email program, or would like to email me directly, please contact hevesia@assembly.state.ny.us. Thank you again for allowing me to continue to serve as your elected representative in the state legislature.

Sincerely,

Andrew Hevesi
Assemblyman 28 A.D.



Assemblyman Hevesi enjoys the Austin Street Fall Fair with Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, Council Member Karen Koslowitz, 112th Precinct Captain Judith Harrison, and 112th Community Council President, Heidi Chain.

Hevesi Introduces State Technology Innovation Center Legislation

Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi recently introduced legislation (Assembly bill A.10187) that would allow for the New York State Director of the Office of Information Technology services to create and operate a State Information Technology Innovation Center. If passed, this legislation would provide New York State Agencies with the ability to test pilot products through a public-private partnership to see if the technology can be implemented and utilized across the state before it is purchased. New York State's leaders in information technology have historically faced significant challenges when integrating technologies into state agencies, including investments in technologies that may not have functioned as anticipated. This bill has since been referred to the Assembly Government Operations Committee for consideration.

Hevesi Co-Chairs Series of Roundtables to Examine and Improve New York State's Response to Child Abuse

Assemblyman Hevesi, Chair of the Oversight, Analysis and Investigation's Committee, joined with Assemblywoman Lupardo, Chair of the Children and Families Committee, to hold a series of roundtables regarding best practices within the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). Following a public hearing held last year by the Members to review the effectiveness of Child Protective Services, the first roundtable focused specifically on the Statewide Central Register (SCR) for Child Abuse and Maltreatment, which handles every call of child abuse and neglect throughout the state via four separate 24 hour hotlines. The trained child protective personnel at SCR are responsible for coordinating the response for each child with law enforcement and any and all social services that may be necessary. Multiple experts in the field of child protective services joined the Members' conversation from various corners of the state including New York City and Buffalo, as well as children's advocates, members of the non-profit social service sector and representatives from the foster care industry. The first roundtable covered the baseline operation of the States Central Registry to look for inefficiencies or gaps in both the law and regulations governing the SCR. The discussion also covered the potential implementation of streamlined technology for the SCR, the legalities and consequences of a policy shift to recording all calls to the registry, as well as coordination between law enforcement and social service providers.

The second roundtable focused on ways to enhance Child Protective Services (CPS) investigations. Concentrating on how to further assist caseworkers by providing them with the proper information and support, the observations and ideas expressed in the second

roundtable provided insight into the organizational guidelines of CPS caseworkers. Additionally, the experts addressed issues related to caseworkers own protection and security. The state Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) were unable to send a representative to both roundtables, prompting the Assembly Members to pen a letter seeking answers from the Agency. Questions in the letter ranged from the number of calls that the SCR receives, to oversight of how the register is monitored and the rights of the person reporting information to the database.



Assemblyman Hevesi discusses best practices for the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) with Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo and other stakeholders at a roundtable on Child Protective Services in New York State earlier this year.

Hevesi Advocates for Enhanced Pedestrian Safety Measures Along Queens Boulevard

In November, Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi wrote a letter to the New York City Department of Transportation's (NYCDOT) Queens Borough Commissioner, Dalila Hall, requesting that a study be conducted to consider employing Audible Beacons and Leading Pedestrian Intervals along Queens Boulevard. The letter was prompted by concerned residents who brought up these concepts at a 112th Community Council Meeting in October. Audible Beacons utilize sound signaling that enables visually impaired individuals to "target" an opposing streetlight, in order to successfully cross traffic without shifting off course or encounter moving vehicles. Leading Pedestrian Intervals adjust traffic light timings to allow pedestrians a

"head start" on vehicles, encouraging drivers to turn only after they have a clear path.

If substantiated by NYCDOT, the plan would notably address traffic safety issues for senior citizens and the disabled that cross at intersections along the corridor, potentially reducing traffic incidents from occurring in the area. Queens Boulevard is historically known for its dangerous traffic conditions. The Assemblyman hopes that the potential use of this system will increase traffic safety across the thoroughfare, as well as allowing for the roads to be more accessible to individuals who travel on foot.

Hevesi Remains Steadfast in Addressing Environmental Concerns of Freight Locomotives

Over the last two New York State Budgets, Assemblyman Hevesi has secured \$6 million through funding allocations to upgrade antiquated and environmentally harmful freight locomotives engines that run in the district and throughout the state. Assemblyman Hevesi has continued to receive crucial and important updates about the progress of these initiatives to ensure the administration of this project remains a top priority. Additionally, Assemblyman Hevesi wrote a letter in October that was signed by numerous lawmakers to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation requesting that any future permits issued by NYSDEC pertaining to MSW-to-rail transport from Long Island have stringent mandates in place. Assemblyman Hevesi is looking forward to continuing the pursuit of clean rail initiatives, making it a focal point on his agenda during the 2015 legislative session.

Assemblyman Hevesi Hosts a SCRIE Informational Session to Update Constituents About Changes to the Program

This past fall, Assemblyman Hevesi, Councilwoman Koslowitz, and the New York City Department of Finance co-hosted an informative event detailing the eligibility and benefits of the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption program, also known as SCRIE. For the first time in close to five years, the eligibility cap for the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) was raised from \$29,000 to \$50,000. The legislature raised the threshold to assist in reducing the cost of rent for New Yorkers 62 years and older. SCRIE is designed to protect eligible seniors from most rent increases who live in rent controlled and rent stabilized apartments, or rent regulated residential hotel units. Please feel free to call our office to find out more information about the program.

Hevesi Co-Chairs Public Hearing on Homeless Services in New York State

Assemblyman Hevesi, in his capacity as Chair of the Oversight, Analysis and Investigations Committee, co-hosted a public hearing with Assemblywoman Michele Titus, Chair of the Social Services Committee, to further understand the effect of the 2014-2015 State Budget on homeless programs throughout New York State. Homelessness is at a critical mass, with the number of homeless adults and children at record levels in New York City. The Assembly Members discussed with stakeholders how local social services districts are combating this crisis, specifically examining how several programs have been funded and are managed.

Several core programs such as the New York State Supportive Housing Program (NYSSHP), the Solutions to End Homelessness Program (STEHP), and the Operation Support for AIDS Housing (OSAH) were reviewed. Testimony was received from numerous providers, advocates, and agencies, including several Deputy Commissioner's from the New York City Department of Homeless Services (NYCDHS), and the Commissioner of the Office of Temporarily and Disability Assistance (OTDA). Questions by the legislators to the panel varied from understanding the objectives of homeless services programs in New

York State, to administrative and fiscal barriers that the providers encounter. The hearing highlighted multiple avenues the state can take to address the homeless crisis, and the information provided will play a crucial role as the legislature heads into the 2015 legislative session.



Assemblyman Hevesi, joined by Assemblywoman Titus, addresses an expert panelist at a recent public hearing concerning Homeless Services in New York State. Multiple providers and advocates attended the hearing to discuss state policies and procedures affecting the homeless.

Hevesi Technology Education Initiative Implemented by NYS Education Department

In the 2013 legislative session, Assemblyman Hevesi introduced Assembly Bill A.6540, which required regulations authorizing computer science courses to count towards core curriculum content for secondary schools. This was followed by letters written by Hevesi, and signed by over one-third of the Assembly, to top administrators at the New York State Education Department (NYSED) requesting computer science courses become part of the core curriculum in all state public education institutions. The New York State Education Department took action this fall, issuing new regulations and alerting all public schools in the State of New York that computer science courses are now eligible to count as a math or science requirement for graduation.

The new regulations adopted by NYSED will allow students to pursue and become proficient in courses that were previously not incorporated into the core curriculum of public education institutions. The inclusion of computer science in the baseline education of students is absolutely crucial to keep pace with the continued rise of basic computer literacy standards in the modern workplace. This change by NYSED will not only encourage participation in computer science courses but will dramatically increase a students' competitive marketability in the technology sector in later years. This dramatic change by NYSED came after extended efforts by numerous public and private stakeholders, including partners such as Microsoft and Code.org, whom advocated for the new regulations.

Hevesi Co-hosts 3rd Annual E-Cycling Event

Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi and Councilwoman Karen Koslowitz joined together to co-host their 3rd annual e-cycling event this past fall at the Forest Hills Jewish Center. Over 9,000 pounds of electronics were obtained, with the outdated technology scheduled to be recycled in an environmentally sound manner. Reusing and recycling consumer electronics conserves our natural resources and avoids air and water pollution, as well as greenhouse gas emissions that are caused by manufacturing new materials. Electronic devices such as computers, laptops, cell phones, chargers, printers, etc., were acquired for safe disposal.

Apply for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) if you are a Low-Income Individual

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) helps low-income homeowners and renters pay bills for heating fuel, equipment and repairs. HEAP is a federally funded program that assists eligible households with grants to pay regular and emergency energy heating costs. HRA administers the program in New York City, and the benefits do not have to be paid back.

HEAP eligibility is determined by whether the household income is below the current New York State income guidelines that correspond to the household size and the household energy costs. HEAP may be able to offer a benefit even if heat and utilities are included in the rent or the applicant lives in subsidized housing and pays directly for heating costs. For more information, please contact the HEAP hotline at 212-331-3150.



Assembly Member Hevesi addresses the crowd at the 41st Annual Forest Park Fair in September.

Hevesi Participates in 26th Annual New York Cares Coat Drive

Thousands of New Yorkers will have to make a choice this winter between buying a warm coat and taking care of some other simple needs. Many low-income residents rely on donated coats during winter to keep warm in the colder months. New York Cares Coat Drive is in its 26th year of accepting and donating coats. If you are interested in donating, please drop by our office, or call to find the closest drop off location in your area.

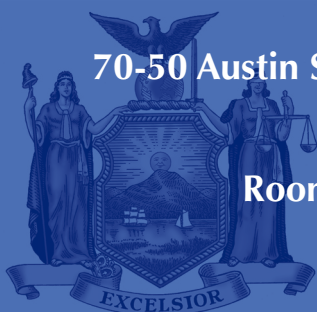
SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

- ✓ *Assisted a constituent in receiving their backdated tax return through the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance.*
- ✓ *Aided a constituent with obtaining a corrected lease from their landlord.*
- ✓ *Helped a constituent navigate forms from the Department of Motor Vehicles so they could obtain a specialized identification card.*
- ✓ *Worked with the Human Resources Administration to assist with a constituents Medicaid.*
- ✓ *Assisted an individual in resolving an issue with their National Grid bill.*
- ✓ *Helped a constituent complete an application for the New York City Department of Finance's Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) program.*



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Reports to the People

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