

# Michaëlle C. SOLAGES



Assemblywoman  
22<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District



SUMMER 2024

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION RECAP

Dear Neighbor,

As your representative in the New York State Assembly, I've been listening closely to your concerns about affordability, education, health, crime, and the environment. I'm excited to share that during this 2024 legislative session, we made significant progress on all these fronts.

I'm also thrilled to report that several of the bills I sponsored this year have been approved by both houses of the legislature and are now awaiting action from the Governor. These bills tackle critical issues, from increasing state government transparency to improving maternal health outcomes.

But our work doesn't stop here. I'm committed to ensuring every family in our community enjoys a more affordable and secure future on Long Island. This newsletter provides updates on my efforts and achievements, and I encourage you to stay connected by subscribing to my email newsletter and following me on social media. You'll get the latest news on my legislative and community work, as well as information on upcoming community events and resources.

Sincerely

Hon. Michaëlle C. Solages

## FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 BUDGET UPDATE

### HEALTHCARE

Tackling high healthcare costs makes a real difference in improving overall affordability. In this budget, **we eliminated all copays on insulin in state-regulated plans.**

Our local safety net hospitals on Long Island provide healthcare to our most marginalized communities, and I am proud to help **secure funding for financially distressed safety net hospitals.**

Supporting the health and well-being of mothers and children has been a priority of mine in the Assembly. This budget includes a new requirement for employers to allow for **20 hours of prenatal leave for pregnant employees and grants employees 30-minute paid breaks to express breastmilk.**

Expanding on my work to give more people access to doulas for childbirth, this budget **creates a new Community Doula Expansion Pilot Program** to support doula providers in our state.



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## EDUCATION

This budget protects Long Island’s school districts from cuts to Foundation Aid by **reinstating the “Hold Harmless” provision which ensures no district can receive a cut.**

**Total aid to schools in the budget has increased** by \$1.3 billion, along with additional funds for Non-public School Aid.



We also allocated funds to study the Foundation Aid Formula to determine if it is possible to **offer more after-school programs to every school-aged child in New York State.**

The budget also **creates the New York State Zero-Emission Bus Resource Center.**



## TRANSPORTATION

Funding for Long Island’s public transportation is necessary to meet the transportation needs of all our neighbors. The budget secures a 5.4 percent **increase in funding for non-MTA downstate systems.**

In addition, the budget allocates **\$100 million to fund local road improvements** through the CHIPS program.



Assemblywoman Solages met with Long Island Railroad (LIRR) President Rob Free to discuss station repairs across the 22nd Assembly district.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Our local governments must be well-resourced to meet the needs of our communities. For the **first time in over a decade, the Aid and Incentive for Municipalities (AIM) funding has increased markedly.** This budget implements a 7 percent increase in state aid for municipalities in the 22nd District.



Assemblywoman Solages nominated the Village of Valley Stream for state funds to reconstruct the Hendrickson Park pedestrian/bicycle path.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

Every student should have access to higher education without going into excessive debt. To assist students with the cost of college tuition, we **expanded TAP eligibility** to part-time students and increased the income thresholds for all students. The **minimum TAP award was doubled** from \$500 to \$1,000.



## CLIMATE, ENVIRONMENT, AND ENERGY

Protecting our natural resources is vital, especially here on Long Island. This budget provides **\$500 million to support clean water infrastructure**.

\$400 million was allocated to the **Environmental Protection Fund** to support environmental projects.

Ratepayers deserve affordable energy from utilities that put their interests first. The Public Utility Law Project received an increase in funding to **support efforts against utility rate increases and to protect ratepayers**.

Through our advocacy in including the **Urban and Community Forestry Grants** in the budget, the Village of Valley Stream secured **grant funding to plant new trees in the community**.



## LIBRARIES

Our public libraries are essential community spaces that deserve our sustained support. The budget provides an **increase in aid to public libraries** and a **\$44 million investment in library capital projects**.



## CANNABIS ENFORCEMENT

New York's cannabis industry must be kept tightly regulated with rigorous enforcement. The Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) is now authorized to padlock unlicensed businesses for a full year, ensuring the **shutting down of illicit, unlicensed cannabis storefronts** can go forward.

In addition, local governments are now allowed to pass laws to **execute padlock orders on illegal cannabis retailers**.

Landlords who knowingly rent to retailers selling cannabis without a license will also face fines.



## ADVOCATING FOR HOMEOWNERS AND TENANTS

Numerous steps are taken in the budget to improve housing affordability and stability. The budget sets aside **\$4 million to fight housing discrimination**.

This year, we continued funding the Homeowner Protection Program (HOPP) for **legal services and home retention counseling for vulnerable homeowners**.

This budget allocates an **additional \$15 million for eviction prevention legal services**, bringing the total investment to \$35 million.



## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Protecting our small businesses is key to sustaining our local economy. We are cracking down on retail theft by **increasing the penalties for offenders who assault retail workers**. In addition, more funding was secured for **retail theft enforcement** along with a **\$3,000 tax credit for business owners to invest in security resources**.

We **expanded the number of offenses that can be prosecuted as hate crimes** to fight against the rising tide of hate. By investing **\$35 million in the Securing Communities Against Hate Grant**, houses of worship, religiously affiliated schools, and other at-risk sites will be better protected.

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## SOLAGES-SPONSORED BILLS PASSED BY BOTH HOUSES OF THE LEGISLATURE



**Making HOPP Permanent (A7636C):** Mandates permanent funding for the Homeowner Protection Program, which funds legal assistance and retention counseling for vulnerable homeowners.

**Tracking Suspicious Firearms Purchases (A9862):** Financial institutions would be required to create new merchant codes for gun and ammunition sales to help monitor suspicious purchasing patterns.

**State Government Transparency (A10281):** Improves transparency for state government contracts given out during states of emergency.

**Expanding Donor Milk Insurance Coverage (A7790A):** Requires all health insurance plans to cover outpatient use of pasteurized human donor milk (PDHM) for infants who cannot receive maternal breast milk for medical or physical reasons.

**Class Action Lawsuit Reform (A8609):** Courts would not be able to deny or withhold a class action lawsuit against the government simply because the lawsuit impacts government operations.



**Reimbursement for Public Service Commission Participation (A8611):** Allows residential and small business utility customers to access financial resources to participate in Public Service Commission proceedings.

**IDA Reform (A7532B):** Makes industrial development agencies (IDAs) more responsive to communities by requiring a representative of a local labor organization and either a school board member or superintendent of a school district to be on the board of the IDA.

**Community Doula Directory (A8529):** Signed into Law - Expands access to doulas for childbirth by establishing the Community Doula Directory.

**Junk Fee Elimination (A7167):** Prohibits administrative fees from being imposed at the end of a car lease.



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### OTHER NOTABLE LEGISLATION PASSED THIS YEAR

The **Child Data Protection Act** and the **SAFE for Kids Act** gained the approval of the Legislature and were signed into law by the Governor to enhance online safety for children. These laws restrict access to addictive social media feeds and prohibit the sale, collection, use, or sharing of personal data of users under the age of 18 on websites.

Assemblymember Solages joined Attorney General Letitia James in Floral Park earlier



this year to highlight the need for these measures. Parents, educators, and medical professionals all attested to the negative impacts of excessive social media use on youth mental health. This legislation will help curtail the most harmful elements of social media affecting our young people.

The legislature also passed the **Climate Superfund Act** this year. If signed into law, this will establish a \$3 billion fund each year to pay for projects to address the impacts of climate change. It would be funded by the biggest polluters contributing the most to the climate crisis.

