



Assemblyman

# DAVID I. WEPRIN

## Reports to the Community

December 2012

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Dear Friends,

I hope you all have recovered from the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. We never expected or could have anticipated the significant damage and destruction the storm would cause our communities; while most of my Assembly District was spared major damage or prolonged outages, a number of us lost power for many days. We are fortunate to have escaped the wrath of the storm, but those just 15 miles south in the Rockaways were devastated. Our thoughts and prayers continue to go out to those who are still struggling, especially during the holiday season.

In the 2012 legislative session, we accomplished a number of our goals in the State Assembly. We closed the state's \$3.5 billion deficit, restored critical funding for education and healthcare programs, and funded important job creation and infrastructure improvements. This includes providing the resources necessary to protect our children, students, and our most vulnerable citizens.

Now that the new district lines have been approved and finalized, the 24th Assembly District has been partially reshaped. My district will now include new communities and no longer include others, but we will happily always try to help anyone who contacts our office.

The district lines remove our current office on Marathon Parkway, but I am excited to announce that we are moving. We will be up and running in the new space by the first of the year. We will miss our friends and neighbors in Little Neck, but look forward to new ones on Union Turnpike.

Please do not hesitate to contact my district office for more information on any of the items highlighted in this newsletter or any concerns you may have. As always, you can contact my office by email at [weprind@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:weprind@assembly.state.ny.us).

I will continue to do everything possible to ensure that our community has the services and resources it needs to thrive in the new year. I look forward to working together.

I wish everyone the happiest of holidays and best wishes for a happy and healthy 2013. Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

David I. Weprin  
Member of Assembly

## Please Join Us For An *Open House* In Our New District Office

Sunday, January 13, 2013  
11am - 2pm

185-06 Union Turnpike • Fresh Meadows

Please come celebrate our new office space and meet your new neighbors. Refreshments will be served.

To RSVP, please call us at **347-696-1358**  
or send us an email at [weprind@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:weprind@assembly.state.ny.us).

## Assemblyman Weprin Collects Donations For Victims Of Hurricane Sandy

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, Assemblyman Weprin and his staff coordinated a collection of items for those who lost nearly everything in the storm. We collected clothing, diapers, baby formula, toys, towels, flashlights, etc. We were overwhelmed by all the donations and thank everyone who participated. After the storm, our office coordinated with local agencies on incidents of power outages, flooding, and fallen trees on behalf of constituents. If your property suffered damage during the storm, or if you are still dealing with any other storm-related issue, please contact our office at [weprind@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:weprind@assembly.state.ny.us) to follow up.



The donations for those affected by Hurricane Sandy nearly filled up our conference room in the days following the storm.

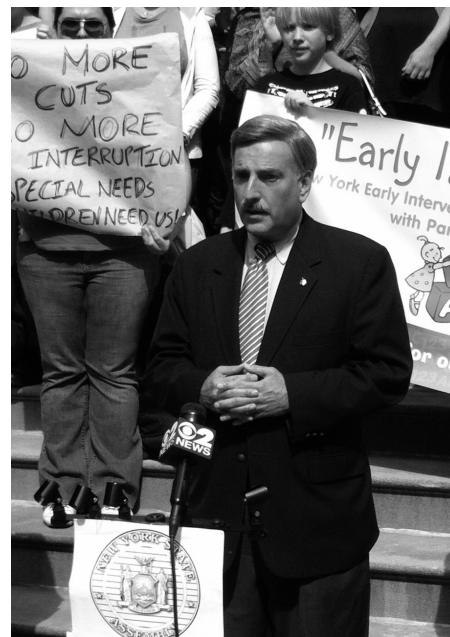
## Assemblyman Weprin Fights NYC DOE's Denial Of Services For Pre-School Special Needs Children

On Sunday, Sept. 30 at City Hall, Assemblyman David I. Weprin, Assemblyman Jim Brennan, and State Senator Eric Adams stood alongside Leslie Grubler, founding director of UNYEIP and more than 150 parents, children, providers, and advocates to protest the New York City Department of Education's Committee on Pre-School Special Education's decision to abruptly suspend critical services for pre-school special needs children in New York City without appropriate notice to parents or providers.

Over the summer, the Committee on Pre-School Special Education (CPSE) signed contracts with large agencies to provide these specialized services to all Pre-K children and refused to honor all prior agreements/contracts arranged by parents. This is a tremendous burden on a population that is already stressed by difficult circumstances. This sudden change in CPSE policy went against a long understood process that allows parents to choose the providers that will work with their vulnerable children.

"I intend to fight this change in policy and will not back down until an agreement can be reached that is amenable to parents," said Assemblyman Weprin. "We will not allow the DOE to make unilateral decisions that so clearly endanger the well-being of our children and their right to equitable educational opportunities. This is not about dollars and cents. This is about doing what is right by our youngest citizens."

After several weeks of phone calls, emails, and letters, UNYEIP was granted a meeting with NYC DOE in early November to discuss the matter.



### Assemblyman Weprin Defends Homeowners Against Water Rate Hikes

Assemblyman Weprin is committed to standing up for citizens who are financially burdened every year by increasing water rates, set by the New York City Water Board. The Assemblyman strongly believes annual water rate hikes are excessive and unnecessary.

In August, Assemblyman Weprin testified at a public hearing organized by New York City's Public Advocate, Bill de Blasio, to call attention to unfair billing practices and a 7 percent hike in fees. He held up his own water bill as evidence of inconsistent and unexplainable charges.

"New Yorkers are facing very tough times and are paying more for less across the board," Assemblyman Weprin said. "This situation could not come at a worse time, as many New Yorkers have been deeply affected by the recent economic downturn and are struggling to pay their water bills at the current rate."

Assemblyman Weprin introduced several relevant pieces of legislation in 2012, including one to restructure the Water Board. The Assemblyman's bill would allow four members of the Water Board to be appointed by the Mayor, one by the City Council, one by the Comptroller, and one by the Public Advocate, instead of all its members being appointed solely by the Mayor. Also, no members would be permitted to be city employees, which would prevent potential conflicts of interest.

Another one of the Assemblyman's bills would prevent the city from forcing homeowners to pay disputed charges associated with their water bills while they are appealing a decision, sparing them from facing late penalties and possible liens on their homes until a decision is reached.

Assemblyman Weprin is also concerned that these rate increases are particularly tough on those with fixed incomes.



Assemblyman David I. Weprin and New York City Public Advocate Bill de Blasio at an August 9th hearing.

### Assemblyman Weprin Calls For Tougher Anti-Discrimination Measures Bill would protect employees against discrimination based on religious dress

In the aftermath of the deadly shootings in the Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin on August 5, Assemblyman Weprin called for tougher anti-discrimination measures to protect workers against discrimination based on religious dress at the workplace.

The Assemblyman's bill, A6170-A, will protect the rights of employees to wear religious garments, including beards and turbans, as well as religious garb worn by Hasidic Jews and Muslim women, while on the job. Members of the New York City Sikh community urged lawmakers to move on the legislation, particularly after the shootings in Wisconsin.

"An individual should never have to choose between their place of employment and their religious observance," said Assemblyman Weprin, at the Sikh Cultural Society in Richmond Hill on Aug. 12. The Assemblyman was joined by Assemblymember Grace Meng, State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky, and City Council member Peter Koo.

"The founding fathers of this country provided freedom of religion as one of the fundamental rights. Discriminatory practices that differentiate individuals based on belief, color or creed denies individuals of their constitutionally protected rights. This bill would codify the principle that all people should be allowed to practice their religious beliefs without fear of reprisal from their place of employment," said Harpreet Singh Toor, the coordinator of external affairs at the Sikh Cultural Society.

On Sept. 28, Assemblyman Weprin joined City Comptroller John C. Liu, the Sikh Coalition, and United Sikhs to launch a petition calling on the city to reform NYPD dress code policies that forbid Sikh officers from wearing turbans and beards, practices that are required by their faith.

The petition, which can be found online at <https://www.change.org/petitions/mayor-michael-bloomberg-allow-sikhs-in-nypd-to-wear-turbans-and-beards>, followed a letter sent by Comptroller Liu to Mayor Bloomberg requesting the policy changes, which was delivered in the wake of the Oak Creek shooting.



## Assemblyman David Weprin Introduces Bill Requiring Gas Stations To Have Power Generators In Case Of Power Outages

In the days following Hurricane Sandy, it was difficult, if not impossible at times, to find a gas station that was open and operational in Queens or anywhere in New York City.

For many gas stations in New York City, the problem was not that they lacked enough fuel, but without electricity, they were simply unable to pump the gas and had to turn customers away. As a result, the few stations that were operational had long lines and long waits for gas, using up scarce resources very quickly.

Assemblyman David Weprin and Rockland County State Senator David Carlucci (D-Clarkstown) introduced legislation in early November to require all gas stations to have back-up power sources in case of a severe storm in New York State.

“It just makes common sense to be pro-active and prepared for these increasingly destructive storms,” said Assemblyman Weprin. “It isn’t good for anyone to be unprepared, but especially our gas stations because of our reliance on gasoline. We all need to be able to function as quickly as possible after a storm strikes. This is very serious.”

The Assemblyman’s bill, modeled on a bill passed in Florida in 2007, will require gas stations and wholesalers to have a generator that is capable of supplying at least 72 hours of power in case of an emergency. They would be required to have the generator source power available for use no later than 24 hours after a major disaster.

*“If we can find a way to prepare for a disaster, we should do it. I will do my part in Albany to see this bill become law long before another Hurricane Sandy.”*

*-Assemblyman Weprin*



## Assemblyman Weprin and State Senator Adams Warn Against Gas Price Gouging Post-Sandy



While thousands of New Yorkers are just beginning to rebuild their lives after Hurricane Sandy hit the city on Oct. 29-30, causing a tremendous gas shortage in all five boroughs, Assemblyman Weprin and State Senator Eric Adams (District 20, Brooklyn) warned businesses throughout the region against taking advantage of motorists by jacking up the price of gasoline.

“We will not allow victims of this terrible storm to be taken advantage of at the gas pump,” said Assemblyman David I. Weprin. “We will do whatever we can to stop unscrupulous individuals from raising their gas prices and knowingly over-charging consumers for gasoline, as the region rebuilds after this terrible storm. We again demand protection for consumers against price gouging at the pump.”

Earlier this year, the two lawmakers introduced bills, A6173/S3631, mandating all gas stations in the State of New York post a sign near each gas pump that lists contact information for the entity authorized to investigate consumer complaints and take action against violators who willingly hike up their prices.

## Assemblyman Weprin Fights for Rent Stabilization and Tenant Protections

Assemblyman Weprin has and will continue to work to strengthen New York’s rent laws and protect tenants’ rights. This year, the Assemblyman helped pass a comprehensive package of bills that would keep rent costs down and families in their homes. Assemblyman Weprin works to ensure that our neighborhoods remain affordable for working families. The Assemblyman sponsored a bill that would extend and enhance the property tax abatement program for homeowners in housing cooperatives and condominiums in New York City.

## Assemblyman Weprin Meets New Van Buren High School Principal



*In September, Assemblyman Weprin met with Sam Sochet, the new principal of Martin Van Buren High School, to discuss plans for the future of Martin Van Buren. Mr. Sochet has been a dedicated high school educator for over 25 years.*

## Assemblyman Weprin Celebrates Claire Goldberg’s 100th Birthday!



*From left: City Councilmember Mark Weprin, Assemblyman Weprin, and State Sen. Toby Stavisky present Claire Goldberg with a special State Assembly proclamation marking her 100th birthday in August.*

## Assemblyman Weprin Calls For Passage Of Bill Preventing Sex Offenders From Entering Children's Sections Of Our Libraries

In response to an alleged sexual assault of a 10-year-old girl at a branch of the Queens Library in the middle of the day on Monday, Oct. 15, Assemblyman David Weprin advocated for the immediate passage of his bill (A.10815/S.7823) prohibiting sex offenders from entering into the children's section of public libraries.

"This is absolutely outrageous. We simply cannot allow any more of our children to be harmed by registered sex offenders in our communities," said Assemblyman Weprin. "This horrific assault at the branch location could have been prevented. It is a

failure of our legal system that these predators are able to enter our public libraries and harm our precious children. We must stop this now."

Assemblyman Weprin co-sponsored this bill with State Senator John Sampson in 2011. The bill would prohibit all persons required to maintain registration under the sex offender registration act from entering a children's section of a public library. Back in 2011, there was an incident involving two small girls, ages 6 and 9, at another branch of the Queens Public Library and the accused perpetrator was on parole for

possession of child pornography at the time of the incident.

"Libraries are places where our children learn – from the youngest toddlers to the freckled faces of our delightful teenagers – and there is no excuse for a convicted sex offender to have access to the children's areas of any library, said Assemblyman Weprin. "New York State has taken numerous steps to ensure that sexual predators do not have access to children – but clearly we need to do more. I intend to work with my colleagues in Albany to ensure our laws do not provide loopholes for predators."



### Assemblyman Weprin Thanks Retiring Congressman Gary Ackerman

Assemblyman David Weprin and Congressman Gary Ackerman have worked together for more than two decades. Congressman Ackerman announced his retirement earlier this year from Congress, where he has served for 15 terms. Assemblyman Weprin attended a "thank you" party for the congressman on Sunday, Nov. 18 at Queens College. "Congressman Ackerman has been an extremely passionate and dedicated public servant. His accomplishments and lengthy record of service speak for themselves. His voice on the issues we care about will be sorely missed," said Assemblyman Weprin.

### Assemblyman Weprin Fights To Increase Minimum Wage

Assemblyman Weprin continues to push for an increase in the minimum wage in Albany. During these difficult economic times, the Assemblyman believes raising the minimum wage is the right thing to do. An increase in the minimum wage would help ensure that New Yorkers living on minimum-wage salaries can actually support themselves and their families on the minimum wage. Over the past five years, New York's minimum wage has only increased by \$0.10 per hour, which is not enough for New York City families to pay rent, heat, gasoline, food, and prescription drugs. Increasing the minimum wage would significantly improve the quality of life for more than 1 million New Yorkers.

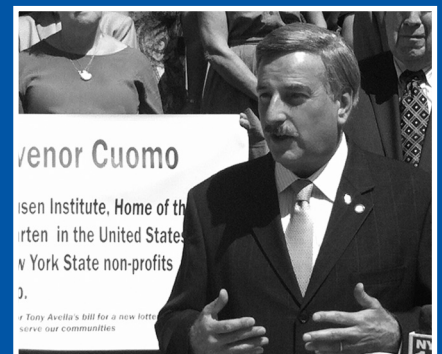
### Assemblyman Weprin Speaks At Rally In Support Of Local 1-2

On July 17, 2012, Assemblyman Weprin joined other elected officials and community leaders to stand with the then-locked-out Con Ed workers at a huge rally in Union Square at the height of the summer. After the extended lock-out, the two sides eventually reached an agreement.



### Assemblyman Weprin Sponsors Legislation Creating A Community Grant Fund To Be Funded Through New Lottery Game

In August, State Assemblyman Weprin and State Sen. Tony Avella joined Community Board members, representatives of non-profits, community groups, including senior centers, veterans groups, youth sports programs, and historic preservation groups, at a rally on the steps of Queens Borough Hall in support of legislation that would create a new lottery scratch-off game whose proceeds would be strictly dedicated to a new Community Grant Fund. Since 2010, the executive branch of the state has eliminated discretionary funds that could be used to fund local programs in legislators' districts. The loss of these funds has placed tremendous financial burden on local groups that have relied on this supportive funding to provide vital community programs to the state's residents. Community programs have been left in the cold in their efforts to provide educational, recreational, cultural and senior programs to communities that have relied on those services for years. This includes things like senior centers, youth sports programs like Little Leagues, afterschool programs and many, many other important community based programs. The new lottery game proceeds that will be dedicated to the "Community Grant Fund" will enable these important community programs to continue to operate.



### Assemblyman Weprin Brings Together Immigrants And Small Businesses

On Sunday, Sept. 16, Assemblyman Weprin hosted Immigrants Connect 2012, an event that brought together government and community-based resources to assist new immigrants and small businesses in the district. The event, sponsored by the New York State Department of Labor, was held at the Taj Mahal Restaurant on Hillside Avenue in Jamaica.