



Assemblyman
**Edward C.
Braunstein**

**Reports to the
People**

Dear Neighbor,

I am proud to report that my first legislative session in Albany was a success. Under the leadership of Governor Andrew Cuomo, New York State passed an on-time budget that balanced a \$10 billion deficit while protecting funding for senior centers, passed comprehensive ethics reforms for legislators, and strengthened rent stabilization laws to help middle class New Yorkers afford to stay in their homes. Over the last six months, I was also able to steer three bills to passage in the Assembly. This newsletter will elaborate on these accomplishments as well as inform you of other actions I have been taking to make sure Northeast Queens remains the best place to live in New York City.

In addition, I want you to know that my office is available to assist you. If you are having trouble dealing with state or local government issues, please do not hesitate to contact us. My staff and I are always here to help you with obtaining benefits, government forms, or applications; providing information on programs; and developing legislative solutions to community problems.

Finally, this summer I will be holding several mobile district office hours at various sites throughout our community. The next one will be on Saturday, August 6, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Key Food in the Whitestone Shopping Center (153-55 Cross Island Parkway). My staff and I will be on hand to assist you in any way we can.

Sincerely,

Edward C. Braunstein
Member of Assembly

**Assemblyman
Braunstein's
Mobile Office is Coming to You**

**Saturday, August 6
11a.m. to 1 p.m.**

**at Key Food in the
Whitestone Shopping Center
(153-55 Cross Island Parkway)**



Assemblyman Braunstein attended a rally to celebrate the restoration of funding for 20 firehouses in NYC, including Engine 306 in Bayside. Assemblyman Braunstein was an outspoken supporter of Engine 306 throughout the budget battle.

Assemblyman Braunstein passes three bills in his first legislative session

The first of Assemblyman Braunstein's bills that passed the Assembly was bill A.6733. This new law, which awaits Governor Andrew Cuomo's signature, would require the State Office of the Aging to assess the senior center network throughout New York State and make recommendations as to what programs and services are most successful in protecting the health and well-being of the elderly. Assemblyman Braunstein remains committed to fighting for the interests of our senior citizens and ensuring that older New Yorkers live their later years with dignity and respect.

Assemblyman Braunstein pledged to protect the quality of life of the residents of Northeast Queens. He fought to pass bill A.4769, which bans the sale, manufacture, distribution, and possession of dangerous "bath salt" drugs. Fake "bath salts," not to be confused with aromatic bath salts, are actually meth-like drugs that have become increasingly prevalent throughout the country because they are not yet illegal under federal guidelines. Governor Cuomo signed the bill into law on July 15 and applauded Assemblyman Braunstein for "working to pass this much-needed legislation."

Finally, the Assembly passed Assemblyman Braunstein's bill, A.8251, which awaits the Governor's signature, and would eliminate what many would consider an unnecessary burden on cell phone insurance companies. Current regulations require certain disclosure requirements of insurance brokers to protect consumers. While these



After providing a legislative update, Assemblyman Braunstein served lunch to seniors at SNAP of Eastern Queens.

regulations certainly make sense for most insurance categories, they were never intended to apply to the cell phone insurance industry. Given the difficult economy, it is important that State Government work to reduce expensive and unnecessary regulation of business in New York State.

Priorities for 2012

Cap Property Tax increases for Co-op owners

The numerous problems encountered during this year's property tax assessments for co-ops in Northeast Queens made it abundantly clear that there must be changes to this system. Unlike one- and two-family homeowners whose property tax assessment increases are capped at 6% from year to year, similarly situated co-op owners do not enjoy these protections. Therefore, during difficult budget times, NYC may be pressured to attempt to manipulate its assessment formulas for co-ops in an effort to generate additional revenue. Assemblyman Braunstein introduced bill A.6852, which aims to move co-ops to the same assessment class as single-family homeowners. Over the next several months, he plans to discuss this bill with other elected officials, local co-op leaders, and NYC government and reintroduce a similar proposal for the 2012 legislative session. Thankfully, NYC tenants recently saw rent stabilization laws extended. This leaves co-ops as the only form of middle class housing without protections to help keep residents in their homes.



Strengthen Campus Safety Act

Assemblyman Braunstein introduced bill A.7476, in an effort to increase safety on New York's college campuses. According to a 2007 study by the U.S. Justice Department bill, 1 in 5 college females have been the victims of attempted or actual sexual assault and a shocking 95% of those cases go unreported. This legislation would strengthen the current law by requiring that colleges and universities

notify local authorities of all violent felonies and missing persons within 24 hours. "Violent crimes like rape demand the immediate involvement of local law enforcement," Assemblyman Braunstein said.

"This would prevent colleges from handling criminal incidents internally instead of contacting local authorities, who are more properly trained to investigate such matters."

2011 Legislative Session

Budget closes \$10 billion deficit, restorations soften sharp cuts



“Very difficult choices had to be made to close a \$10 billion deficit. We worked with Governor Cuomo to ensure that the state’s fiscal burden did not fall disproportionately on working families. I fought for restorations to soften the sharp cuts because we simply can’t afford to abandon our public schools.”

— Assemblyman Braunstein

Assemblyman Braunstein announced details of the 2011-2012 state budget, which cuts state spending by \$3 billion over last year, closes the \$10 billion deficit, restores vital programs and focuses on job creation.

“Very difficult choices had to be made to close a \$10 billion deficit,” Assemblyman Braunstein said. “We worked with Governor Cuomo to ensure that the state’s fiscal burden did not fall disproportionately on working families. I fought for restorations to soften the sharp cuts because we simply can’t afford to abandon our public schools.”

New York City senior centers have played a key role in improving the lives of seniors in our community. That’s why the budget

restores \$25 million of funding to these centers.

“We had to make a lot of tough decisions in this budget, but protecting the quality of life for our seniors is vital,” Assemblyman Braunstein said. We have an obligation to care for those who have made lifelong contributions to our communities and we must continue providing the services they need and deserve.

“Although recent figures show that the unemployment rate is slowly dropping, there are still many hardworking Northeast Queens residents looking for work. The budget makes our state more business-friendly to attract new jobs and new capital, while also boosting funding to programs designed to protect and create jobs.”

Assembly passes sweeping ethics reform agreement

“Public officials and employees have a responsibility to remain accountable to the people they serve. Unfortunately, the actions of a few have painted state government in a negative light,” said Assemblyman Braunstein. “The Assembly passed legislation supported by Governor Andrew Cuomo to bring ethics reform to Albany. Closing loopholes and beefing up investigations are a few of the commonsense provisions that will bring much-needed faith in government back to the people.

“This legislation is unlike any measure we’ve seen in our state government,” Assemblyman Braunstein said. “It works to bring a level of accountability and transparency to a system that many of the people of New York have lost faith in. Namely, it will strengthen ethics oversight, increase disclosure of outside income requirements for public officials and end the unjust practice of using taxpayer money to fund pen-

sions of officials convicted of felonies related to their positions.”

Under current law, officials convicted of a felony related to their jobs still receive their taxpayer-funded pension benefits. “It’s inexcusable that those who abuse their power and violate the public’s trust enjoy pension benefits on the taxpayer’s dime,” Assemblyman Braunstein said. “This new legislation aims to correct this grave injustice by eliminating or reducing pension

benefits in such cases. Taxpayers ought to have confidence in how their money is used, and spending it on the pension of a person who abuses their power is simply not acceptable.

“This legislation builds on past public accountability measures and lets everyone know unethical behavior will not be tolerated in Albany. Together, we will rebuild the public trust and make sure New York State government is working for the people.”

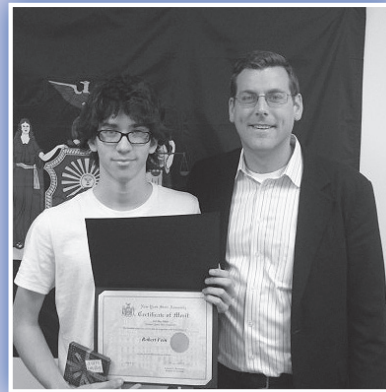
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Around the Community



Congratulations to the winners of Assemblyman Braunstein's Mother's Day Essay & Poetry Contest 2011! The winners were (L-R) Chris Georgiadis of P.S. 209, Grace Liu from P.S. 21, Eric Samson from St. Andrew Avellino School, Savannah Sclafani from Sacred Heart School, and Sean Flynn from St. Mel's School.



Assemblyman Braunstein with Robert Fein of Flushing, a student at Long Island City High School. Robert's entry, "Far, Far Away," won 1st Place in Assemblyman Braunstein's Northeast Queens Photo Contest.



Assemblyman Braunstein provided a legislative update to the members of Bayside Senior Center and Director Susan Shafer.



Assemblyman Braunstein with Sacred Heart 4th Grade Cub Scout Pack 49 and Den Leader Gina Bacile. Assemblyman Braunstein discussed how a bill becomes a law in the State Assembly, which helped the scouts earn their Citizen pins and Webelos badges.

Assemblyman Edward C. Braunstein

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