



Assemblywoman Jo Anne Simon

Reports to the People

June 2016

Budget 2016

The legislature once again passed the budget on time. The Executive budget contained some startling proposals including cutting \$485 million from CUNY by shifting the costs of the 4 year colleges from the State to the City. It also proposed to transfer the State's obligations under Medicaid to the City as well. With strong advocacy from a cross section of New Yorkers, the Assembly successfully blocked these damaging proposals.

I'm proud to share with you some notable highlights as well. First, I am proud that the enacted budget is consistent with the Assembly Majority's advocacy to put our families first and invest in their future success, and for investments and policies that support workers and enable them to climb the ladder of economic opportunity.

Minimum Wage

In an amazing achievement, the legislature raised the minimum wage to historic levels. The minimum wage gradually increases over the years with a quicker implementation in New York City and downstate counties where the cost of living is higher. For example, the hourly wage would be increased for workers in New York City employed by large businesses having 11 employees or more, to \$11 at the end of 2016, then by \$2 each year thereafter, to reach \$15 by 2018. For those workers employed by small businesses having fewer than 10 workers within the City of New York, the minimum wage would rise to \$10.50 by the end of 2016, with additional annual increases of \$1.50 each year thereafter, to reach \$15 by 2019. For workers in Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester Counties, the enacted budget would raise the minimum wage to \$10 by the end of 2016, then by an additional \$1 each year until reaching \$15 an hour by 2021. In the upstate regions, the minimum wage would increase to \$9.70 at the end of 2016, and continue doing so until 2020 after which it will be indexed.

Paid Family Leave

We passed the most progressive paid family leave bill in the country. It will gradually provide up to 12 weeks of paid leave benefits for workers who have been employed for at least six-months, to care for an infant, a family member with a serious health condition or to ease the burden placed on families when earners are called into active military service.

Education

While we were not able to fully fund the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE), we eliminated the regressive Gap Elimination Adjustment and provided more funding for educational foundation aid than ever before with significant funds to convert struggling schools to community schools. The elimination of the GEA, however, puts the state on track to provide increased school aid in the future to enhance funding for New York's neediest schools, many of which are in New York City. We also put \$20 million to the My Brother's Keeper initiative which was established by President Obama to address the enduring opportunity gaps faced by males of color.

Higher Education

There will be no tuition hike for New York's public colleges. We increased Tuition Assistance and educational opportunity programs, increased funding for capital investments and fought back against the unprecedented effort to shift the state's obligations to the CUNY system and Medicaid to New York City. I am proud to have worked hard on this effort.

Infrastructure

We also increased funding for water and sewer infrastructure throughout the state and a significant capital housing plan.

We provided new funding to assist in providing much needed services to those who are among the growing population experiencing heroin and opioid abuse.

Last but not least, we successfully fought to fund the MTA's \$27 billion capital plan, added \$1 billion for the next leg of the Second Avenue subway, ensuring that New York City's transit riders will be able to commute safely and on time.

There were some disappointments as well, of course. New York has as yet to raise the age of criminal liability (we are only one of 3 states who hasn't done so) or pass the DREAM Act or the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA), or close the LLC Loophole which would dramatically reduce the influence of money in our political system. Assemblymember Simon has been proud to vote for these bills in the Assembly, the Senate must now act on these bills before they can go to the Governor for his signature.

Rallying with CWA/Verizon Employees

On Wednesday, April 13 and Saturday, May 21, I rallied with the Communication Workers of America, representing Verizon employees, who have been working without a contract since Fall 2015. Verizon has been dragging its heels on installing FiOS service, much in demand here in Brooklyn - plus the company is consolidating service and call centers while stalling on contract negotiations and cutting back on new hires and contributions to employee pensions. This is bad for our economy and bad for Brooklyn's hard working families. **Update:** the strike has been called off and an agreement has been reached by the parties.

A6079 Signed into Law

The following bill, sponsored by Assemblymember Simon, has been signed into law by the Governor:

A6079: simplifies reporting under New York's Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA). The EAJA authorizes awards of attorney's fees to litigants who have been wronged by unjustified actions of New York State agencies, such as not-for-profits, small businesses and individuals of limited means. This law will eliminate the Office of the State Comptroller's need to submit duplicative paperwork.

Dyslexia Awareness

We kicked off Dyslexia Awareness Day with a press conference at the New York State Capitol on Monday, March 14th with Assemblyman Jim Tedisco, Dr. Marilyn Bartlett and Assemblymember Simon's former chief of staff, Ptahra Jeppe. Both houses of the legislature passed resolutions proclaiming October as Dyslexia Awareness Month.

Assembly Bill A.4330A will amend the education law to require that the word "Dyslexia" appear on a dyslexic student's (Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and not just the broad category of learning disability. Right now, the majority of school districts don't allow the word Dyslexia to be used. That really matters because knowing the type of learning disability helps teachers and administrators know how to target reading interventions.

A.4330A also requires that teachers in training take courses in methods of teaching reading that build on the 5 pillars of reading (phonemic awareness, phonic, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension), including what is referred to as "Orton-Gillingham" instruction - structured, research-based, multisensory approaches. These are supported by the National Reading Panel's findings in 2000.

This will also lead to early screening and identification, when children can make the most progress and before they have fallen far behind their peers.



Thank you to our incredibly engaged Dyslexia Awareness Day event panelists:

Alexandra Dropp
Bank of America/Merrill Lynch

Connor McGrath
Eye to Eye Ambassador

Marilyn Bartlett, PhD
*(Plaintiff in landmark case Bartlett v.
NYS Board Law Examiners)*

Ptahra Jeppe
(entering student at Syracuse Law School)

*...and a heartfelt thank you to our
moderator, Mary Beth Carroll,
Language Specialist at the
Children's School in Park Slope.*

Thanks also to Mary McDowell Friends School, Kildonan, The Churchill School, The Sterling School, The Windward School, and all the students, teachers, and parents from throughout New York State who attended.
Look for more Dyslexia Awareness activities to come!

Constituent Corner



This issue's featured constituent is a little younger than last edition's – she's only six years old; but, boy, has she been a busy first grader at St. Joseph the Worker Catholic Academy! Meet **Maria Teresa Heyer**. She was one of five young people who were selected to greet Pope Francis when he landed at JFK International Airport. And as if that wasn't honor enough, little

did our pint-sized parishioner from Sacred Hearts-St. Stephen Church know that the papal security person protecting the Pontiff would lift her up for a very personal blessing from Pope Francis. According to Maria Teresa, meeting Pope Francis was very exciting, but a little nervous-making as well. After all, both the NY POST and the DAILY NEWS featured her picture on the front covers, and to top it all off, the next day she was featured on Fox and Friends, Fox News and Good Day, New York. Carroll Gardens may never be the same again!

Supporting MoveNY

I joined Assemblyman Robert Rodriguez along with Assembly colleagues Michael Blake and Guillermo Linares, and MoveNY coalition members at a press conference on March 24 to announce legislation that, if passed, will raise over \$1B in new annual revenue for New York's transit infrastructure needs. I am proud to be a co-sponsor of this bill (A09633), introduced by Assemblyman Rodriguez, because it make a real difference in the lives of New Yorkers: increasing public transit, lowering inequities in the system of tolling and providing much needed capital dollars to the chronically underfunded transit network New Yorkers and New York's economy depend on.



Presidential Primary Voting Irregularities

I wish I could say that I haven't spent hours in hearings delivering testimony about Board of Elections' systemic problems.

Please continue to let me know about your experiences voting on April 19th - the good, the bad and the ugly. We will only improve voting in New York if we take a hard look at what's working and what's not, and come together on a set of reforms that will increase access to voting. Send your comments to me at simonj@assembly.state.ny.us



Assemblymember

Jo Anne Simon

invites you to her

Annual Senior Resource Fair



Co-sponsored by
State Senator **Velmanette Montgomery**
and State Senator **Daniel Squadron**



Friday June 24, 2016 • 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

St. Francis College

180 Remsen Street, Brooklyn Heights (Between Court & Clinton Streets)

New This Year:

Town Hall/Q&A Session at 12:00 p.m.

with Special Guest Assemblyman **Steven Cymbrowitz**
Chair of the NYS Assembly Committee on Aging



FREE Admission (NO Registration Required) • FREE Information & Light Refreshments

- NYC Dept. for the Aging • Access-A-Ride • FDNY– Fire Safety Education • NYS EPIC Program •
- Brooklyn Public Library/Services for Older Adults • Free dental screenings • Visiting Nurse Service of NY •
- and many other exhibitors!

For more information contact Assemblymember Simon's office at 718-246-4889



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