



Dear friends,

A few weeks ago, the legislative session ended in Albany. Before we enjoy the holiday weekend, I wanted to share some of the major bills I passed in the Assembly. These bills will protect immigrant communities from ICE, expand access to mental health care, prevent extremists from controlling what books kids read in schools, protect marine life and ecosystems and improve voter education.

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### **Combating ICE - MELT Act Passes!**

One year ago, [I introduced the Mandating End of Lawless Tactics \(MELT\) Act](#) in response to the dangerous tactics being used by ICE. The MELT Act ([A8908/S8462](#)) ensures greater transparency and accountability in law enforcement by prohibiting officers and agents at all levels from covering their faces while carrying out operations in New York. It also requires that officers be clearly identifiable from their uniforms—through a name, badge number, or other visible marker.

After over a year of the Trump Administration escalating the use of secretive, unmarked, increasingly unaccountable forces, I am incredibly proud to have passed this bill as part of this year's state budget and it is now law!

Beyond the MELT Act, the budget included a significant immigration package that also:

- Equips New Yorkers with the legal tools to hold ICE and any other government actors accountable for civil rights abuses.
- Establishes sensitive locations in which ICE cannot enter without a court order or judicial warrant. Sensitive locations are described as: healthcare facilities, houses of worship, housing accommodations, schools and higher education institutions, childcare facilities, nursery schools, summer camps, senior centers, parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, recreation centers, and polling places.
- Ensures that employees of state and local governments, schools, and higher education institutions do not collaborate with federal officials for immigration enforcement purposes.
- Prohibits state and city governments from entering into agreements to implement immigration enforcement functions, known as 287(g) agreements. Similarly, NY State will be

unable to enter into contracts that house or detain individuals for federal civil immigration violations and prohibit local governments from paying for services related to these detainments.

- Establishes the Office of Immigrant Trust within the Office of the New York State Attorney General to receive complaints and conduct investigations regarding these described provisions.

Learn more about the new immigration laws here: [Assembly Announces Enacted Budget Includes Protections for Immigrant New Yorkers](#)



Last week, [the Trump Administration sued New York](#) in an attempt to block the MELT Act and we responded with a countersuit. Let me be clear, I wrote the MELT Act in coordination with law enforcement professionals and legal scholars, to stand up to constitutional muster. We will win, and this case will set new precedent across the nation.

I applaud Governor Hochul and Attorney General James for standing up to the Trump Administration's attempt to undermine New York's authority to protect its residents. No one is above transparency, and no law enforcement officer, local, state, or federal, should be permitted to operate in the shadows while carrying out public duties.

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## **Expanding Access to Mental Health Care - History Made with Passage of PSYPACT**

Since taking office, I have made reforming our mental health care system one of my top priorities. One major gap many people currently experience is they cannot talk to their therapist when leaving the state. This affects students going to out of state colleges, those who travel for work, athletes, and seniors retiring to other states. These gaps in our loss of therapy have had tragic results.

A few years ago, I was introduced to the solution, PSYPACT, or the Psychological Interjurisdictional Compact. PSYPACT is an agreement between states to recognize psychological licenses across state lines. New York would be the 44th state to join PSYPACT. The problem was that New York has never entered an interstate compact regarding medical licenses in its history and passing these bills has been viewed as impossible.



Speaking in the Capitol with members of the NYS Psychological Association and the founders of the Jake Collective

Thanks to my incredible legislative partner State Senator James Skoufis, and powerful advocacy by the New York State Psychological Association, the Jake Collective and even Super Bowl Champion AJ Brown, we passed PSYPACT ([A6744/S7136](#)) in both houses! The bill now awaits Governor Hochul's signature and if signed, will be a significant benefit to New Yorkers' mental health and will save lives.



Superbowl.Champion.AJ.Brown.speaks.at.the.Capitol.in.support.of.PSYPACT

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### **Freedom to Read Passes!**

Last year, I passed the Freedom to Read Act to combat extremist instigated book bans in our schools. The bill was ultimately vetoed by Governor Hochul.

Every young person should have the opportunity to see their identity and experiences reflected in the books they read and the lessons they learn. Students deserve access to a full, inclusive education—free from censorship and discrimination. As a closeted gay kid, stories and histories within books were the only place I could learn about who I was, be inspired by my heroes like Harvey Milk, and learn about the AIDS crisis.

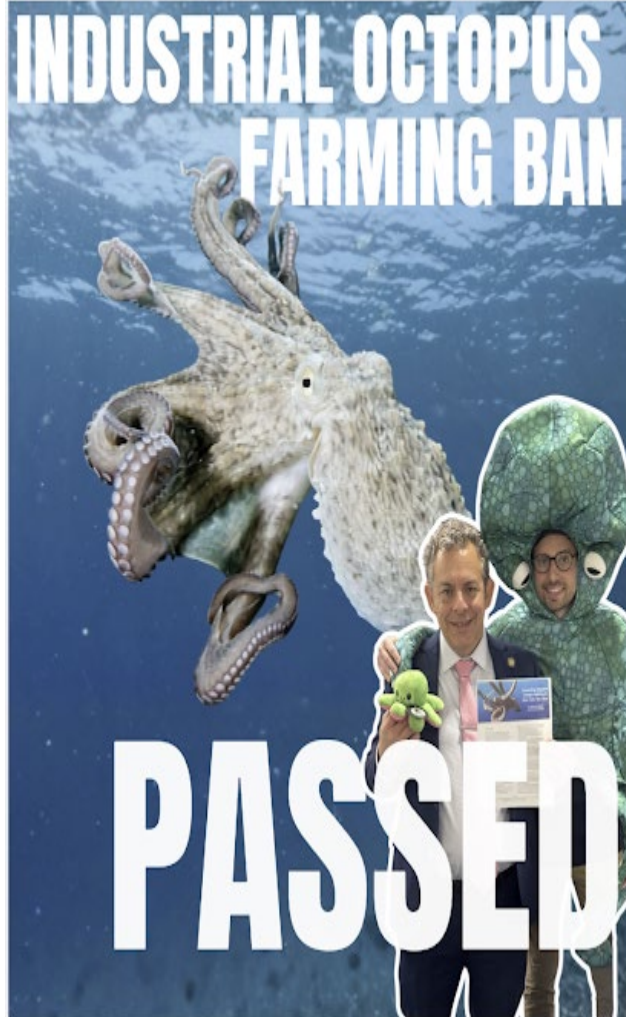
This year, I introduced a new version of the bill ([A9537/S8630](#)) with State Senator Rachel May that will protect students' intellectual freedom and ensure that small groups of extremists can not decide what everyone's kids can or cannot read. Thanks to the strong support of teachers, librarians, LGBT and civil liberties advocates, we passed the bill in both houses in a bipartisan vote with wider margins than last year, and this time I am confident the Governor will sign the bill into law!



Speaking on the steps of the New York Public Library in support of the bill with Assemblymember Alex Bores and NYSUT President Melinda Person

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## Protecting Marine Ecosystems - Octopus Farming Ban Passes!



Last year, I was made aware of foreign companies planning to begin mass farming octopus, think factory farms in our oceans. The practice of farming octopuses is [highly inhumane](#) due to their intelligence and importance to the ecosystem. [Intensive factory farming would raise significant environmental concerns](#), lead to genetic pollution and lead to the decline of the wild octopus population.

States all along our coasts have taken action to ban this inhumane practice before it can begin and I am proud to have sponsored New York's ban.

The bill ([A8043/S7421](#)) passed both houses thanks to my fellow sponsor, State Senator Monica Martinez, and now awaits the Governor's signature.

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## Improving Voter Education - Online Sample Ballots Passed!

A strong democracy requires an informed electorate. Too often, voters go to the polls and are confronted by choices they did not expect or fully research, such as ballot questions or judicial elections. This is why I, along with State Senator James Skoufis, passed legislation ([A6741/S6253](#)) that will require state and county boards of elections to post sample ballots online at least twelve days before the start of early voting. This will ensure that all voters have easy access to view the ballot in advance of voting and can make educated, thoughtful decisions.

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## Preparing New York for the World Cup - Parts of Host Act Enacted by State

I introduced the HOST (Hospitality and Open Space Transformation) Act ([A10339/S9405](#)) with State Senator James Skoufis to give cities, towns and small businesses all across the state the tools they needed to take advantage of the huge economic opportunity of the World Cup. Communities and small businesses should be in the lead of planning.

While the bill did not come to a vote this year, the message we sent alongside local restaurant and bar owners was heard loud and clear by the state.

Governor Hochul unveiled a plan in April to support small businesses by establishing a World Cup One-Day Permit. This permit utilizes existing State Liquor Authority processes to achieve the intent of the HOST Act, allowing license holders to establish contiguous outdoor space to host events during the World Cup. The World Cup One-Day Permit allows service to be extended into contiguous unlicensed outdoor areas and bars and for TVs to be set up throughout the duration of the World Cup events.



While the legislative session in Albany may be done for the year, our work never stops. My office is hard at work on new legislation to increase housing affordability, protect veterans targeted by the Trump administration, and more!

Thank you so much for reading our Community Update! I hope that the resources and information about our work was valuable to you. As always, my office and I are here to serve you, so if you need any assistance, such as with a state agency, unemployment benefits, or housing issues. Please email us at [simonet@nyassembly.gov](mailto:simonet@nyassembly.gov) or call us at 212-807-7900.

Stay tuned for my next update and in the meantime, I hope you enjoy the holiday weekend!

In service,  
Tony