

First 100 Days Legislative Update from Assemblyman Steve Otis

Week of January 14th

In the new legislative session, the NYS Assembly, the Senate and Governor Cuomo are committed to moving key legislation early in the session. During the first 100 days of 2019, important bills that previously passed the Assembly but were not voted on in the Senate will be acted on in both houses in the upcoming weeks. Below please find an update of key pieces of state legislation that passed both the Assembly and Senate this week:

1. Voting Reforms

Seven new voting reforms were enacted to make it easier for all eligible voters to vote and to increase voter participation. New York currently ranks 47th out of 50 states in voter turnout. These new reforms will make it easier to register, vote and bring increased public participation in the election process at every level. The reforms include:

- Same-day voter registration
- Early voting within nine days of an election
- Expansion of access and use of absentee ballots
- Combining federal and state primaries to a single day
- Pre-registration of 16 and 17 year olds
- Streamlining the voter registration process.
- Closing the LLC campaign finance loophole

2. GENDA

Both houses of the Legislature also passed the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA) to protect New Yorkers against discrimination based prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity or expression. Another bill was passed to prohibit a mental health professional from engaging in efforts to change or convert the sexual orientation of an individual under the age of 18.

3. Delay in property tax for federal employees

This legislation will allow local governments and school districts to give furloughed federal employees a temporary extension to pay their property taxes.

I was a co-sponsor of all of these measures. The Governor will act on these bills in the near future. This week also brought the presentation and release of the Governor Cuomo's 2019-20 State Budget proposal, which will also be a major part of the work of the legislature for the first three months of 2019. I am pleased to report that the Governor has proposed adding an additional \$2.5 billion to water quality programs including the Water Infrastructure Improvement Act grant program that I helped initiate in 2015.