



Dear Friends,

As we march towards the end of this pandemic, I couldn't be more pleased that COVID-19 cases in Westchester remain low. Last week, there were *no COVID deaths recorded*. Hopefully, this trend will continue.

However, there are still new cases reported every day, **so we cannot let these lower rates lull us into a false sense of security**. Particularly for those who are not vaccinated, this new Delta variant is highly transmissible. Countries are considering or even [reimposing restrictions](#), as the variant has led to a concerning uptick in cases.

As [nearly all COVID-19 related deaths in this country are among the unvaccinated](#), **I cannot stress enough that if you are not yet vaccinated, please go right away**. Scheduled and walk-in appointments [are widely available at state sites](#), including at the Westchester County Center, which has available both the Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer vaccines. You can also look for availability at [non-state run sites near you](#).

Before getting to the main focus of this week's newsletter, I would like to mention that you might notice below information from previous newsletters provided once again. Please know we do this with a specific purpose: not everyone sees every newsletter and we want to make sure this important information is getting to the people who need it.

Finally, for those who may be interested, here are the [new laws taking effect](#) in July 2021. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions.

## **[Opting In or Out: Municipalities and Recreational Marijuana Sales](#)**

There has been a lot of discussion in communities all across the 93rd Assembly District, indeed all across our state, as **municipalities are considering whether or not to opt-out of the recreational marijuana sales made legal by the [Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act \(MRTA\)](#)**, which passed the New York State legislature and was signed into law this past March.

*(Please [click here](#) if you missed the April 2nd newsletter covering the issue.)*

If municipalities do not pass a law opting out of sales via adult-use dispensaries and/or adult-use consumption sites by December 31, 2021, they are automatically opted-in to allowing such establishments under the MRTA. After that, a municipality no longer has the ability to opt-out, but may still impose reasonable time, place and manner restrictions on these establishments. Municipalities which adopt local laws to opt-out now, however, can pass legislation in the future to repeal the local opt-out law, if they so choose.

For those municipalities that do plan to opt-out, the decision is subject to a permissive referendum. What that means, is that a petition can be circulated and if enough signatures are collected, the question of opting in or opting out is put on the ballot for the voters to decide (*note that only those registered to vote in the municipality qualify to sign and witness these petitions*). In cities and towns, the proponents must collect signatures equal to at least 10% of the total number of votes cast in the municipality for Governor in the last gubernatorial election (2018). The petition must then be filed with the clerk of the municipality no later than 45 days after the passage of the law opting out. (*Please note: referendums for villages follow a different timeline and require a different number of signatures.*)

Here is where the timeline becomes important and why many municipalities are holding meetings and hearings on the issue now: **in order for this referendum to make it onto the ballot for the November general election, a town MUST opt-out no later than July 19, 2021**, which will start the clock on the 45 days available to circulate a petition and get the requisite number of signatures. Those signatures therefore must be collected and turned in no later than September 2nd, 60 days before the general election, which is the minimum number of days required by law in order for a referendum to appear on the November ballot.

If a town chooses to opt-out later in the year (but no later than the December 31 deadline), that opt-out is still subject to a referendum; however, a special election will need to be scheduled (which is why many municipalities are working under the July 19 deadline).

A final note: **the issue of opting in or out by the municipality is limited ONLY to the issue of sales**. Within the limits of the MRTA, it is now legal for anyone in New York over the age of 21 to possess, use, and grow marijuana recreationally.\* Sales, meanwhile, are not expected to start until late 2022 or early 2023, while the legislation's rules and structures are put into place, including the creation of The Office of Cannabis Management, which – among other functions – will have the exclusive ability to issue licenses and permits.

For those of you who are interested in learning more about the MRTA and about this issue specifically, I encourage you to read [this presentation](#), put together by Keane & Beane, a law firm that specializes in municipal law and does work on behalf of various municipalities in Westchester, including in my Assembly District. The presentation does a good job of explaining many facets of the MRTA, which can be quite complicated.

\* The MRTA allows individuals to cultivate a total of six cannabis plants, consisting of three mature and three immature plants at their residence, and allows for a total of 12 cannabis plants per residence; individuals are allowed to possess up to five pounds of cannabis at their residence, stored securely.

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## **[Have You Visited Playland Yet?](#)**

For those of you who don't know, Playland is open! After having missed last season due to COVID-19, Westchester County was able to open the park this year to guests, including the reopening of the recently-refurbished Grand Carousel, which was damaged in a fire in 2017. The 106-year-old carousel has been part of the park since its opening in 1928, and its refurbishment is part of more than \$100 million in capital improvements planned for the park over the next few years.



The park is open from Wednesday through Sunday through Labor Day Weekend (it will also be open on Labor Day, September 6). **Beginning tomorrow night (postponed from tonight, due to the weather), and for every Friday until September 3, there will be fireworks over the Long Island Sound.** So take a trip over to Rye with your friends and family, and make a day and night of it! Learn more at [playlandpark.org](http://playlandpark.org).

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## **Reminder: Child Income-Tax Credit Payments Begin THURSDAY!**

A reminder that **payments on the temporarily-expanded federal tax credit, provided for in the American Rescue Plan will begin next Thursday, July 15th.** Households representing more than 65 million children (88% of U.S. children) will qualify for this refundable tax credit.

Eligible families will receive a payment of up to \$300 per month for each child under age 6 (with a maximum annual credit of \$3,600 per child) and up to \$250 per month for each child between ages 6 to 17 (with a maximum annual credit of \$3,000 per child). The benefit begins to phase out beginning at incomes of \$150,000 for married couples, \$112,500 for a Head of Household single parent, and \$75,000 for single filers. The regular tax credit of \$2,000 (minus any payments received) remains in place for individuals whose income remains below \$200,000 for individuals and \$400,000 for couples.

Payments will be made via direct deposit, paper check or debit cards beginning July 15th and continuing on the 15th of each month through December. In addition to receiving these monthly payments (which represent the credit for the first half of the tax filing year 2020), recipients will receive the rest of their benefit as a credit next year when they file their 2021 tax returns.

Parents can also opt out of the monthly payments and instead receive the full, expanded credit on their tax returns next year. To learn more, visit: [www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/advance-child-tax-credit-payments-in-2021](http://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/advance-child-tax-credit-payments-in-2021). And for more information about the credit in general, go to [childtaxcredit.gov](http://childtaxcredit.gov).



The IRS is sending the first monthly payment through the expanded **Child Tax Credit** starting **Thursday, July 15**

As part of the federal American Rescue Plan, eligible low- and middle-income families will receive **monthly advance payments from July through December.** Eligible recipients who filed their 2020 tax returns will receive the benefit automatically.

The graphic features three circular images: a woman and child, a man and child, and a family of four.



El Servicio de Rentas Internas (IRS) enviará el primer pago mensual mediante el **Crédito Tributario por Hijos Ampliado** a partir del **jueves, 15 de julio.**

Como parte del Plan de Rescate Estadounidense federal, las familias elegibles de ingresos bajos y medianos recibirán **pagos mensuales por adelantado de julio a diciembre.** Los beneficiarios elegibles que sometieron su declaración de impuestos del 2020 recibirán el beneficio automáticamente.

The graphic features three circular images: a woman and child, a man and child, and a family of four.


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## Reminder! Has Your Driver's License Expired? Time to Renew!

As the COVID-19 state of emergency has come to an end, if you have not yet renewed your expired driver's license, now is the time! Through August 31, 2021, New Yorkers with expired/expiring licenses who don't have recent vision test results can self-certify that their vision is acceptable and provide additional documentation within a year of renewal. Visit <http://dmv.ny.gov/driver-license/how-renew-license> to learn more.

As New York regains a sense of normalcy, the time has come for those with driver's licenses or permits that expired on or after March 1, 2020, to renew them.

If your license expires between March 1, 2020 and Aug. 31, 2021, you can renew your license online now and submit a vision test to the DMV within a year of your renewal.



A medida que Nueva York recobra un sentido de normalidad, ha llegado el momento para que aquellas personas cuyas licencias, o permisos de conducir vencieron en o después del 1.º de marzo de 2020 los renueven.

Si su licencia vence entre el 1.º de marzo de 2020 y el 31 de agosto de 2021, ahora puede renovar su licencia en línea y someter un examen de la vista al Departamento de Vehículos de Motor (DMV) dentro de un año de su renovación.



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## Reminder: Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program Open

The [Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program](#) is now open. The program provides qualifying seniors aged 60 and over with a booklet of checks that can be used to purchase fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets and farm stands. Visit [agriculture.ny.gov/consumer-benefits-farmers-markets](http://agriculture.ny.gov/consumer-benefits-farmers-markets) or contact my office or your local office for the aging to learn more.

— THE —  
**Senior Farmers Market  
NUTRITION PROGRAM**

(FMNP) provides checks to seniors to buy local produce at farmers markets from JULY 1 TO NOV 3.

— CHECKS ARE PROVIDED —  
on a first-come, first-served basis for low-income New Yorkers over 60.



— EL —  
**Programa de Nutrición  
del Mercado Agrícola para  
Adultos de Edad Avanzada**

(FMNP) les provee cheques a los adultos de edad avanzada para comprar frutas y verduras en los mercados agrícolas del 1º DE JULIO AL 30 DE NOVIEMBRE.

— LOS CHEQUES SE ENTREGAN —  
por orden de llegada para los neoyorquinos de bajos ingresos mayores de 60 años.



## [Child Care Relief for Essential Workers](#)

COVID-19 has only exacerbated the need for affordable, high-quality child care. **The NYS Office of Children and Family Services is administering \$25 million in funds to provide child care support for children of essential workers.** Families who are currently receiving child care scholarships through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act are strongly encouraged to apply for this new scholarship. Visit <http://ocfs.ny.gov/childcarerelief> to apply or learn more.

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| <h3>Essential Worker Child Care Scholarship</h3> <p>The Office of Children and Family Services is providing <b>\$25 million</b> in child care scholarships for children of essential workers.</p> <p>Eligible workers with children ages six weeks to 12 years old whose income is less than 300% of the federal poverty level will receive assistance for child care costs through this initiative.</p>  | <h3>Beca de Cuido Infantil Para los Empleados</h3> <p>La Oficina de Servicios para Niños y Familias provee <b>\$25 millones</b> en becas de cuidado infantil para los hijos de trabajadores esenciales.</p> <p>Los trabajadores elegibles con hijos entre seis semanas y 12 años de edad, cuyo ingreso está por debajo del 300% del nivel de pobreza federal, recibirán ayuda para los costos del cuidado infantil mediante esta iniciativa.</p>  |
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## [FINAL REMINDER: Assembly Summer Reading Challenge!](#)

One last pitch for those who may have missed seeing this previously: **I am inviting the children of the 93rd Assembly District to participate in the Assembly's annual Summer Reading Challenge**, held in partnership with New York State Libraries.

**The challenge asks children to read a book for at least 15 minutes a day, for a minimum of 40 days, during the months of July and August.** Children can read on their own or with a partner or caregiver and mark off days on the [calendar provided](#). Once they've completed 40 days or more, please submit the completed materials to me at [burdickc@nyassembly.com](mailto:burdickc@nyassembly.com) and I will send your child an **Assembly Excellence in Reading certificate**, to recognize their efforts and dedication. The (optional) theme for the 2021 challenge is "Tails and Tales" to encourage children to learn more about their favorite animals and explore the world around them.

*(Please note this challenge can be done in concert with other reading challenges... so if your child has already signed up for a challenge at school or the library, the reading completed for those challenges can count towards the requirements of this challenge as well.)*

Take part in the New York State Assembly's 2021  
**Summer Reading Challenge**



You can find the calendar and other materials needed to complete the challenge [by clicking here](#). And if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at (914) 244-4450 or [burdickc@nyassembly.gov](mailto:burdickc@nyassembly.gov).

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As always, if there are any issues that you would like to see covered in a future newsletter, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at [burdickc@nyassembly.gov](mailto:burdickc@nyassembly.gov) (or simply reply to this email). **Please also follow me on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for the most up-to-date information.**

Miss any of our previous newsletters? You can [find them here](#).

Sincerely yours,



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