



Dear Friends,

Last week, I was honored to have NYS Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie pay a visit to the 93rd Assembly District. It is a practice of the Speaker to visit new Assemblymembers in their districts, and I was so pleased that he was able to join us.

As you know, there is a great deal in my district of which I am proud. That day, I had the opportunity to introduce the Speaker to three of them: the wonderful and inclusive [Lewisboro Playground Improvement Project](#) for the Lewisboro Town Park; the critical work of the [Community Center of Northern Westchester](#) (*discussed below*); and the incredibly significant role [Neighbors Link](#) plays in turning the American Dream into a reality for so many in the immigrant community.



If you aren't familiar with these organizations and their work, I would encourage you to become so. In the meantime, a huge thank you to Speaker Heastie and his staff for visiting us... we hope to have the opportunity to host you again soon!

Next, on **Saturday, October 23** we will be holding our next "Service Saturday" – a food drive for the [Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry](#). We will be sending out additional information shortly, but please note that we will once again be collecting non-perishable food items in our office, beginning this Monday, for those unavailable on October 23.

Finally, before moving on to the rest of the newsletter, an exciting social media announcement: I am now on Instagram! **Please follow me at [instagram.com/AssemblymemberBurdick](https://www.instagram.com/AssemblymemberBurdick) for updates and helpful information.** And if you aren't, please also follow me on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

[A Perfect Day in the 93rd AD](#)

When we were trying to decide where to take Speaker Heastie for his visit, it was a real challenge! But it was a fun challenge, mainly because this is such an amazing district.

In fact, just two days before the Speaker's visit, on a recent Saturday, I had one of those days that reminds me just how lucky I am to represent this area. From morning until night, there were fantastic events throughout the 93rd Assembly District, ones that so well exemplify what a special place this is.

My morning started with a trip down to White Plains to visit the **2021 Annual Neighborhood Health Fair** at Calvary Baptist Church, sponsored by White Plains Hospital. With many community-based health care providers in attendance, the event featured free health screenings, information and entertainment.

Next, I attended the [Friends of Karen](#) brick path dedication in North Salem. The bricks contained loving messages from Friends of Karen families, friends and supporters. At the event, I was honored to be able to present this incredible organization with a New York State grant to help them with their mission (*more on that below*).

By the early afternoon, it was back to White Plains, where I joined the **Westchester Women's March**. It is hard to believe that in 2021, a woman's right to choose is not only still being attacked, but now is under full-out assault. In attendance at the event were an inspiring group of women, choice advocates, and other government officials who, like myself, support the right of women to make their own reproductive health choices. So many of the speakers also reminded us of the importance of *access*, as those without means so often are the ones hurt most by the restrictions being enacted across this country.



After that, it was on to the [Chappaqua Children's Book Festival!](#) A nonprofit on a mission to connect authors with readers everywhere, they outdid themselves with over 72 authors speaking with children and autographing their books. The Festival is one of the largest in the nation to promote literacy programs, and I was especially pleased to see so many authors whose work

celebrates diversity and inclusion. And what a crowd! Hats off to the organizers on such a successful event.

After that, I moved on to the [Pound Ridge Harvest Festival](#). The park was packed! The community was so happy to be getting out with friends and neighbors, catching up, eating great food, listening to fantastic music (this year's featured band was the Gin Blossoms!) and enjoying a beer or glass of wine (or two). Another incredibly successful event.

After the Harvest Festival, I attended a **sneak preview of the [Katonah Museum of Art's highly anticipated exhibition "Arrivals,"](#)** which opened last week. Guest curated by Heather Ewing, it features some 50 works spanning the 16th century through the present, exploring American myths and origin stories. It's a must-see exhibition.

My day finally came to an end that evening at the **Katonah Fire Department "Backyard Blaze" picnic.** Two live bands, food and amusements made this another wonderful community-building event. It was good to catch up with my friends in the KFD, as well as other friends and neighbors.

What a day! It was so good to be out and about and to enjoy this wonderful district for all it has to offer.

[Support For Those Who Support Our Community](#)

In addition to having the opportunity to attend all these amazing events in my district, as an Assemblymember I also have the opportunity to nominate terrific community nonprofits to receive grants from New York State. Today I wanted to highlight two of these organizations: [The Community Center of Northern Westchester](#) and [Friends of Karen](#).

Simply put, what the **Community Center of Northern Westchester** does for so many in our communities is nothing short of heroic. In addition to providing food and clothing to thousands of households across Northern Westchester, they offer classes and programs, as well as work individually with those in need to assist them in gaining access to resources such as health care, education, and social services – all to get people back up on their feet. And all at no charge.

And when COVID-19 hit, the need was greater than ever. To say they rose to the occasion would be an understatement.

It was truly my honor to secure a \$30,000 NYS grant to help them in their mission. [Click here](#) **learn to more about the Community Center (and their brand-new Community Studio!).**

Since 1978, **Friends of Karen** has provided emotional, financial and advocacy support to over 17,000 children with life-threatening illnesses and their families. Their [family support services](#) are truly a lifeline for families going through unimaginably difficult times, helping with everything from counseling, to assistance dealing with insurance, to financial aid for costs to and from treatment. And that is just a few examples of how they are able to help.

Recently, I was honored to announce a \$20,000 NYS grant that I was able to secure on their behalf. **You can learn more about the Friends of Karen by [clicking here](#).**



Those are just two of the terrific organizations that will be receiving grants. **More to come, so please stay tuned!**

Landlord Rental Assistance Program Now Accepting Applications

Attention small landlords: additional pandemic economic help is now available! The Landlord Rental Assistance Program (LRAP) was created to aid small landlords whose tenants are unwilling to apply for the [Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#) (ERAP). LRAP is even available to qualifying landlords whose tenants have vacated the property. **To learn more about eligibility or the application process, visit www.otda.ny.gov/programs/landlord-rental-assistance or contact my office.**

The Landlord Rental Assistance Program (LRAP)
is now accepting applications!

The program provides landlords with up to 12 months of rental arrear payments. Landlords may be eligible for this state funding if they have tenants who did not apply for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP).



Correction Committee Public Hearing on Rikers Island

The NYS Assembly Correction Committee (of which I am a member) recently held a hearing to examine the horrific conditions for incarcerated individuals, visitors and staff at Rikers Island and other facilities of the NYC Department of Correction. The goal was to learn more about these

conditions, their underlying causes, and potential solutions. Solutions to be considered include changes in state law related to the oversight of these facilities and in the reporting of illnesses, deaths, and unusual and violent incidents.



While Rikers has a long history of poor conditions, recent reports that conditions have deteriorated further prompted the public hearing. Rikers is faced with the impact of COVID-19, including staffing shortages arising from employee absences and staff vacancies. The monitor appointed as a result of the federal lawsuit *Nunez v. City of New York* expressed “grave concerns” about “pervasive high levels of disorder and chaos” in the city’s correctional facilities. NYC DOC reported 12 deaths of incarcerated individuals thus far in 2021.

Many testified that Rikers cannot be fixed and that if it can't be closed immediately, it certainly should be closed sooner than the 2026 date which NYC has set for closure. Testimony not only corroborated the reports mentioned above, but presented an even grimmer picture: the disorder and chaos have become pervasive, and that with locks missing from cells, the most violent among the incarcerated reportedly are running the facility. Many of those incarcerated are mentally ill, literally wallowing in their own feces. They need treatment, but treatment is seldom available.

Regarding staff shortages, it should be noted that sick leave and absenteeism are very high among the officers. Moreover, according to the head of the NYC Correction Officers’ Benevolent Association, only about 45% of the members at Rikers are vaccinated against COVID-19.

Furthermore, despite bail reform, some 80% of those incarcerated at Rikers are there for pre-trial detention rather than serving out sentences. Others are there for technical parole violations. The Governor recently signed into law the *Less is More* act, passed by the legislature earlier this year and which I strongly supported. The law eliminates incarceration as a sanction for most technical parole violations. At the time the Governor signed the law, she ordered the release of 191 individuals incarcerated at Rikers under the terms of the new law. However, certain sections of the law do not go into effect until March 2022, at which time additional inmates incarcerated at Rikers will be released. Meanwhile, we were advised that approximately 800 people remain detained at Rikers because of a parole hold.

There is much work to be done. I will be working with Correction Committee Chair Weprin, my colleagues, and the advocacy community to address these issues.

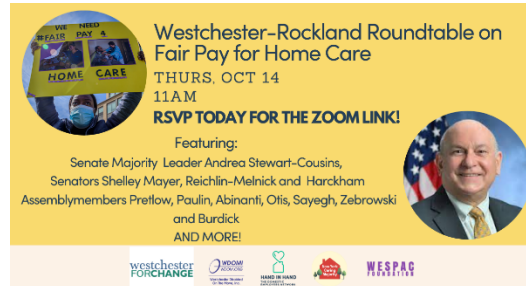
(Note: you can view my remarks and questions during the hearing by [clicking here](#).)

Virtual Roundtable Re: Fair Pay for Home Care

Finally, as a member of the NYS Assembly Committee on People with Disabilities, and Chair of the Subcommittee on Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities, I have been meeting with advocates, people with disabilities and their families, health care workers, and care facilities. Across

the board, **one of the biggest problems is pay for home care workers, whose role is essential.** And having consistent, reliable, compassionate care can only be attained if these workers are paid a fair wage.

Please join me and my colleagues this Thursday, at 11:00 am, for a roundtable on this very issue, discussing the Fair Pay for Homecare Act. [Click here to register.](#)



The flyer is yellow with a circular graphic on the left containing the text 'WE WANT ONLY A HOME CARE'. The main text reads: 'Westchester-Rockland Roundtable on Fair Pay for Home Care', 'THURS. OCT 14', '11AM', and 'RSVP TODAY FOR THE ZOOM LINK!'. It lists featured speakers: 'Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Senators Shelley Mayer, Reichlin-Melnick and Harckham, Assemblymembers Pretlow, Paulin, Abinanti, Otis, Sayegh, Zebrowski and Burdick AND MORE!'. A portrait of Chris Burdick is on the right. Logos for Westchester ForChange, Zoom, Hand in Hand, and WESPAC are at the bottom.

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 (or simply reply to this email). **Please also follow me on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) for the most up-to-date information.**

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

Sincerely yours,



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