



NEWS From Assemblymember John T. McDonald III

Summer 2017

2017 End of Session Highlights



Highlights of bills sponsored by Assemblymember McDonald that have passed both the Senate and the Assembly (awaiting signature by the Governor)

- **A1377/S2274** – Authorizes the Cohoes and Watervliet city school districts to require minors five years of age to attend kindergarten
- **A2784B/S3691B** – Relates to the placing of a lien for unpaid property taxes against the proceeds of a fire insurance policy on any real property located within a municipality
- **A5984/S3516** – Relates to counting representation in the New York state dental association
- **A5780A/S875B** – Requires certain training for coroners and coroner's deputies
- **A6120B/S4557B** – Requires specific Medicaid insurance codes related to complex needs patients' therapy and treatment; requires managed care contracts to comply with certain reimbursement rates
- **A6420/S4658** – Alienates and substitutes certain parklands in the village of Waterford, county of Saratoga
- **A8042/S6411** – Relates to approving a certain agreement for a payment in lieu of taxes
- **A8136/S6552** – Relates to the scheduling of meetings of the board of the Albany convention center authority

Coroners Training Bill

Did you know that coroners are not required to have any training? This question may give you pause, it did when I was first approached by the NYS Coroners Association last year to consider carrying a bill to require that coroners (and their deputies) have some kind of medical legal education once they are on the job. My bill (A5780A/S875B) passed both houses of the Legislature and requires that County Coroners once elected, must take courses to help achieve minimal training and competencies in the important field that is investigating an individual's death.

There are no requirements for an individual as it relates to educational background to be elected county coroner. You

just have to be elected which has caused concern among active coroners as they are very aware of the importance of their role and the significance in the overall investigation of a death. The reality is at the end of the investigation, a coroner makes the final determination of death and as we all know that determination has multiple possible impacts.

The bill requires that the courses shall be prescribed, certified and credited in rules promulgated by DOH in consultation with DCJS, DOS, NY State Police and SED. The counties are not required to pay for the cost however, they may pay if they so choose, otherwise the coroner is required to pay.

Fire Lien Bill



Vacant and abandoned buildings continue to be an eyesore and a problem for municipalities who are fighting blight in their neighborhoods.

Current state law allows a municipality to impose a lien against the fire insurance policy of a real property owner in the event that the owner does not remedy damage to their property caused by a fire. Presently, this law applies to residential, commercial, and industrial properties, but

excludes one- and two-family residences. My bill (A2784B/S3691B) amends the general municipal law to hold property owners of non-owner-occupied two family residential structures accountable for the condition of their real property.

I would be remiss in not mentioning the impetus for this legislation. In 2005, a fire in the City of Albany's first ward damaged a block of several houses. While other property owners made an effort to secure their structures, one homeowner chose not to do so. The result was water damage and mold to the home of his neighbor. In 2015, former City of Albany Common Councilmember for the First Ward, Dominick Calsolaro, brought this issue to my attention. This bill seeks to give municipal governments a mechanism to ensure that property owners affected by a fire make best efforts

to secure their property and protect tenants who live in these buildings. By placing a lien against fire insurance proceeds paid to the owner of a two-family residence when the owner refuses to remedy fire damage, local governments will be able to ensure that landlords cannot simply collect an insurance settlement and abandon their property. This will reduce instances of vacant structures and improve quality of life for all members of the community.

New York Buy American Act

The New York Buy American Act (Morelle A8427A/Robach S6639A) requires that contracts over \$1 million awarded by the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Office of General Services (OGS), the Dormitory Authority (DASNY), the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), the Bridge Authority, the Thruway Authority and the State University of New York (SUNY) Construction Fund, for the construction or reconstruction of surface roads and bridges, utilize American steel and iron unless certain conditions justify an exemption. By supporting state and national manufacturers, the bill ensures that taxpayer-funded projects reinvest in our economy to create more decent-paying jobs.

Further, the measure creates a workgroup with members appointed by the Governor, Senate and Assembly tasked

with evaluating the legislation's impact on reciprocal trade access with other countries. The workgroup will also study the possible expansion of the act to include other American-made products such as cement, concrete and aluminum, as well as report on the act's impact on the capital plans of the DOT, MTA and Thruway Authority.

We need to do more to create good jobs that people can count on. It used to be that a manufacturing job meant you and your family had a ticket to the American Dream. The American Dream is changing; however, the New York Buy American Act will help reinvigorate our economy allowing iron and steel manufacturers to hire more workers and help make it a reality again.

Raise the marriage age legislation signed into law

The Governor has signed a bill that the Legislature passed which prohibits child marriages in New York State. I am pleased to have been a sponsor on this bill that raises the minimum age for marriage to 18 – or 17 with judicial consent (A.5524-B).

It is difficult to believe but up until recently, children who were 14 years old were permitted to be married. Children shouldn't be married, and the fact that they could be has been a mystery to me since I first heard of this matter last year. I cannot think of one positive that could come out of a 14-year-old being married off. The former law is archaic and it's not in sync with other age restrictions, such as for sexual consent, tattoos, smoking, voting or military service.

This law takes critical steps by abolishing any possibility of marriage for 14-, 15- and 16-year-olds. It would require court approval, pursuant to specified guidelines, under which a judge must consider specific factors, such as the existence of any undue power imbalance and the existence of domestic violence, prior to permitting a 17-year-old to marry.

From the moment they are born, we do everything we can to protect our children and give them the best life possible. From fighting to ensure they get a good education, have a safe place to live and never go hungry, we take that responsibility seriously here in the Assembly. Child marriage is wrong and goes against everything we do to build a bright future for our kids – I am glad to see an end to it.

Ridesharing Implementation

As of June 29, 2017, ridesharing is now in effect for Upstate New York. Please visit <https://dmv.ny.gov/more-info/rideshare-information> to keep up to date on information related to transportation network companies (TNCs) along with information for passengers, applicants, drivers, and local governments.

Medical marijuana and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

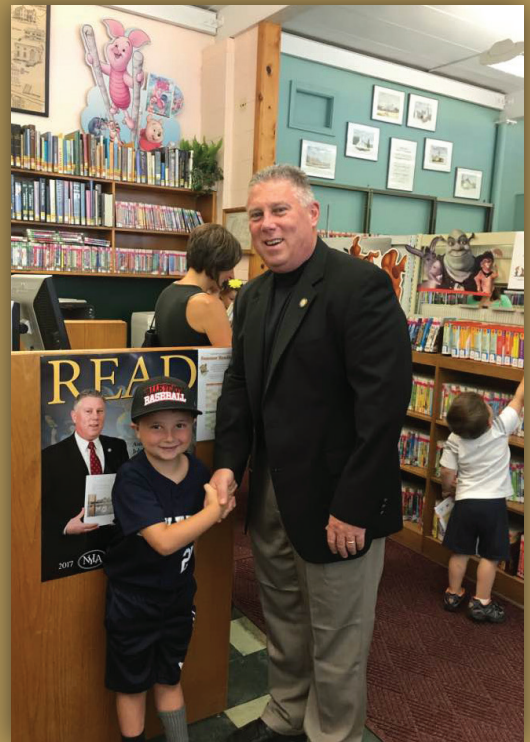
The Legislature passed a bill (Savino S5629/Gottfried A7006) that will hopefully be signed into law that would expand eligibility for New York State's medical marijuana program to those who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. It is unfortunately common for PTSD to go hand in hand with substance use disorders, especially in the

case of veterans who are disproportionately impacted by PTSD. Others affected by PTSD are frequently prescribed addictive drugs and medical marijuana could serve as an alternative treatment option that is already utilized by twenty-eight other states.

AROUND THE DISTRICT



Assemblymember McDonald, Senator Breslin, and Assemblymember Fahy attend the Children's Place at the Plaza merger with Children's Corner.



Assemblymember McDonald visiting the North Greenbush Public Library to promote the Summer Reading Challenge.



Assemblymember McDonald, Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul, and Brian Stratton (Director, NYS Canal Corporation) at the Waterford Canal Opening.



Assemblymember McDonald at the grand opening of Cake Street Sweets in Cohoes with County Executive Daniel McCoy, Mayor Shawn Morse, Albany County Legislature Chair Sean Ward, Cohoes Common Council President Chris Briggs, Mark Eagan (CEO, Capital Region Chamber of Commerce), and Cake Street Sweets owner Kayla Renfroe.

Need a speaker? I am always interested in speaking to new groups and hearing what people have to say in the district. If your organization is interested in having me as a guest at your event or would like a legislative update, please contact my office at **518-455-4474**.

New York State Volunteer Firefighter Gap Coverage Cancer Disability Benefits Act



Assemblymember McDonald speaking at the opening of the Defreestville Fire Department in North Greenbush.
(Photo Credit: Sidewinder Photography)

In June, the Legislature passed a bill that would expand cancer coverage to volunteer firefighters who are diagnosed with cancer related to their firefighter duties. Despite being exposed to the same types of hazardous smoke and fires that full-time firefighters are exposed to, volunteer firefighters are not currently eligible for medical coverage. This legislation would allow eligible firefighters to receive a payment

of \$25,000. If the volunteer is totally disabled, a monthly benefit of \$1,500 per month would be payable up to 36 consecutive months, according to the bill. In the case of death, the volunteer firefighter's family will be eligible for an accidental death benefit in the amount of \$50,000. The bill awaits signature by the Governor.

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NEWS From



Assemblymember

John T. McDonald III

A graphic for a news update from Assemblymember John T. McDonald III. It features a photograph of him speaking at a podium on the left. To the right, there is a dark blue header with the text "NEWS From" in white, a gold map of New York State, and the text "Assemblymember" in white. At the bottom, a gold banner contains his name "John T. McDonald III" in white.

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