



NEWS From
Assemblymember

John T. McDonald III

Winter 2024

2025 Legislative Session Constituent Survey

Dear Neighbor:

Each year, I send a constituent survey asking for input on potential priorities for the NYS Legislature in the upcoming session, bills that may be considered, and feedback on the issues that are important to you. My job as a public servant is to serve and represent the interests of the 108th Assembly District and I take a strong interest in also serving the greater Capital Region while considering the interests of all Upstate New Yorkers. I pride myself on responsiveness and I work along with our team in the office to assist constituents with navigating state agencies and cutting through red tape.

As always, my office is always available to assist in any way we can. If you are looking for assistance regarding state or local government issues, please do not hesitate to contact me by calling (518) 455-4474 or by emailing mcdonaldj@nyassembly.gov. Something that many people know about me is that I do read and respond to my own emails. To stay updated on community and legislative updates, please join my mailing list by visiting my New York Assembly website at <http://nyassembly.gov/mem/John-T-McDonald-III/>.

As a long-time public servant, I have focused since the beginning of my career on affordability and public safety and those issues continue to be my priorities. I continue to work toward initiatives and efforts to make our residents lives better and increase opportunities for all. I encourage you to reach out to me whether to provide feedback on issues, share any ideas you may have, or discuss a problem that needs to be tackled. I am always willing to meet with constituents in my office, out in the district, by phone or virtually through ZOOM. Hearing your voice and what matters to you is extremely beneficial as we shape our legislative agenda and prioritize the needs of the district. It is a privilege to serve you, and it is an honor that I will never take for granted. Thank you for completing the enclosed survey, my door is always open and I look forward to talking to you soon.

Sincerely,

Assemblymember John T. McDonald III, RPh

2025 Session 108th Assembly District Constituent Survey

Please find a constituent survey below that will allow you to provide input on the issues that may come up during the next legislative session. These questions are meant to gauge your opinion on areas that are likely to arise or have been discussed during previous legislative sessions; however, note that these questions are not necessarily indicative of the policy issues that I am focusing on or legislation that I am seeking to advance. For many of the questions, especially on the more controversial issues, I ask for the reasoning behind the answer. Understanding the basis for the responses is incredibly helpful to me when considering pending legislation, and I appreciate the thought and time my constituents take when answering these questions.

Your survey responses help guide my work as your representative in the New York State Assembly. I look forward to receiving your input since I rely on it when voting on measures, sponsoring and supporting legislation, and prioritizing funding in the budget process. Please note that there are two spaces available to allow two members of your household to participate.

There are two ways that you can submit the survey:

- By returning the enclosed survey by mail to our Albany office by January 10 located at the following address:
Assemblymember John T. McDonald III • Room 625, Legislative Office Building, Albany, New York 12248
- By filling out the form online on my website at <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/John-T-McDonald-III/>

**Survey questions have a “Yes” or “No” answer choice:
(select one) and some will have a blank line to write in a number or comment.**

1. **It is clear that affordability remains a concern for most, I want to know where the State should be prioritizing funding for your family. When considering how to allocate the State’s financial resources, what are your three highest priorities for the state budget?**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

2. As we continue to see the impacts of climate change, discussions have been ongoing as to what the next steps are beyond the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (“CLCPA”) that was enacted into law in 2019 and how to fund the objectives of the law. The pandemic and resulting inflation have had major impacts on costs of materials and construction. Considering these new circumstances there are concerns raised about whether we can adhere to pre-2020 goals and timelines. Concerns have also been raised by some as to which costs will be passed down to consumers (the proposed bills do not require nor specify this), questions around the rebates for low- to moderate-income ratepayers, and general questions as to how the legislation will be implemented in practice, including labor provisions. Understanding that it is not possible to explain the various components of complicated bills, what approach do you think is best to help meet the goals of the CLCPA as well as shift our energy source from fossil fuel to renewable energy?

- a. Move as fast as we can while putting aside cost or reliability concerns
 - b. Move strategically while prioritizing reliable supply and affordability keeping in mind that it may take more time
 - c. Do nothing and ignore the CLCPA
- Why? _____

- a. Move as fast as we can while putting aside cost or reliability concerns
 - b. Move strategically while prioritizing reliable supply and affordability keeping in mind that it may take more time
 - c. Do nothing and ignore the CLCPA
- Why? _____

3. The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (A.5322 Glick) (known as extended producer responsibility or “EPR”) is a proposed environmental bill that would require producers (person or companies that create the products) of consumer packaging and paper products to pay to recycle these materials. Producers are prohibited from selling or distributing any covered materials in New York unless they have an approved producer responsibility plan. The program will also create a funding mechanism to cover the costs of the program or cover the cost of a municipality for participating in the program. The funding program will be structured in a way that includes incentives to reward producers for product designs that reduce waste, increases the recyclability of the product, and removes toxics in packaging. Charges will also be adjusted based on the post-consumer recycled content rate of the covered material.

- a. Are you familiar with the EPR legislation?
 Yes No
- b. Do you support passing the EPR into law?
 Yes No Why? _____

- a. Are you familiar with the EPR legislation?
 Yes No
- b. Do you support passing the EPR into law?
 Yes No Why? _____

4. Expanded bottle bill. There is a proposal for a bill (A.6353 Glick) that would expand the type of beverages eligible for a deposit and redemption under the current Bottle Bill and raise the deposit refund value from five cents to ten cents. The bill also expands the list of eligible items for deposit, including juice, coffee, tea, cider, and expanded wine products. Do you support passing an expanded bottle bill into law?

- Yes No Why? _____

- Yes No Why? _____

5. The New York Medical Aid in Dying Act (A.995C Paulin) would allow a mentally competent, terminally ill patient to choose to self-administer medication to end his or her life with additional protective measures in place. Do you support passing the Medical Aid in Dying Act into law?

- Yes No Why? _____

- Yes No Why? _____

6. There is a bill proposed that is referred to as “Fair and Timely Parole.” This bill (A.162 Weprin) would require the Parole Board to release people to community supervision when their minimum period of incarceration has been served unless there is a clearly articulated current public safety reason to keep them in prison. At subsequent board appearances, there would be a presumption of release unless the board determines by a preponderance of evidence that an inmate is unlikely to avoid violating the law and that his or her release poses an unreasonable public safety risk. Do you support passing Fair and Timely Parole into law?

- Yes No Why? _____

- Yes No Why? _____

7. The Raise the Age (RTA) law changed the age that a minor can be prosecuted as an adult to 18 years of age in criminal cases in New York State. Prior to RTA, New York was one of two remaining states to hold 16 and 17-year-olds criminally responsible. There are some who have called for changes to the RTA law due to inconsistency and ambiguity in how judges are interpreting the law and the shift in many of these cases being prosecuted in Family Courts, where the individual is often released to their family instead of incarceration. In some instances, the individual is retained in a youth facility while awaiting court appointments. One major concern that has been raised resulting from the shift of many of these cases to Family Court is that there is difficulty in remanding 16- and 17-year-olds who are in possession of illegal firearms because some are being directed to Family Court, resulting in immediate release.

Do you support keeping the Raise the Age changes in place which means keeping these cases in Family Courts?

- Yes No Why? _____

- Yes No Why? _____

8. There are groups who are advocating for legislation (A.2035 Davila) known as Elder Parole that would require a Parole Board hearing for elderly New York incarcerated people, irrespective of the nature of the crime that they were convicted of, who are 55 years of age and older (due to the common perception that many incarcerated persons experience “accelerated aging”) and have served at least 15 years of a sentence. If parole is denied, they would automatically receive another Parole Board hearing within 24 months for reconsideration. Do you support requiring the parole board to evaluate all inmates who are 55 years old and older for early release from prisons who have served at least 15 years of a sentence?

- Yes No Why? _____

- Yes No Why? _____

9. Migrants and asylum seekers are currently unable to seek expedited work authorizations from the federal government. An asylum seeker is someone who is seeking protection from danger in his or her home country. Asylum seekers cannot apply for protection until they arrive in the United States. Crossing an international border for asylum is not illegal and the asylum process can take years to complete. Allowing expedited work permits would allow asylum seekers to address some of the workforce challenges that businesses in NYS are facing and would allow them to obtain Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITIN) to allow them to pay

NYS income taxes. There is a bill in NYS that proposes a temporary state work permit system, even though the authority to grant the permits is considered a federal authority. Do you support NYS legislation to allow asylum seekers to work in New York State and allow them to obtain tax ID numbers and pay NYS income taxes?

Yes No Why? _____ Yes No Why? _____

10. There has been discussion around economic development spending and how we can improve how the state invests in funding projects and targeting incentives to be the most impactful. Some examples include: Eliminating Local Development Corporations and empowering Industrial Development Agencies with the authority to give grants and loans; Tax credits; Grants; Increased transparency in spending. Which proposals, if any, do you support as economic development spending reforms and why?

11. The burden of student loan debt has a profound impact on the economy and not only impacts the financial decisions of the student borrowers but also the parents and guardians who may assist in financing higher education. Some examples of proposals include: Tax credits for parents and borrowers; Low interest loans; Expanded loan forgiveness programs; Better refinancing options; Government subsidies for education; or Increased consumer protections for borrowers. What do you believe would be the most beneficial in addressing the student loan crisis and why?

12. There is a bill (A.7897 Paulin) proposing a single payer healthcare system in New York. The legislation proposes to pay for the program through a progressive payroll tax for individuals and businesses. There would also be a graduated tax on income. Those with taxable incomes of \$50,000 or less would be exempt if enrolled in Medicare, those with taxable incomes of \$25,000 or less would be exempt overall. Taxes would be scaled up as enrollment grows. The federal government would need to grant a waiver to use federal funds for a single payer plan as well, which makes a program contingent on the waiver being granted. Do you support a single payer (Medicare-for-all) healthcare system?

Yes No Why? _____ Yes No Why? _____

13. Many families struggle to find affordable and reliable child care, and child care centers struggle to retain staff due to salary constraints. What do you think would be helpful to address the current child care crisis?

14. Vacation rental websites, such as Airbnb, HomeAway, and VRBO are online marketplaces that enable home-sharing. Provided that they are required to pay all related taxes and are compliant with current building codes, would you support these types of businesses in New York?

Yes No Why? _____ Yes No Why? _____

15. Despite additional charges of corruption in politics, there has been little progress in the way of meaningful ethics reform. What in your opinion is the most important ethics reform measure that New York should enact? Select one option only.

- a. Enhanced disclosure requirements
- b. Pension forfeiture
- c. Per diem reform
- d. Campaign finance reforms (i.e. Lower limits for political contributions)
- e. Other _____

Why? _____

- a. Enhanced disclosure requirements
- b. Pension forfeiture
- c. Per diem reform
- d. Campaign finance reforms (i.e. Lower limits for political contributions)
- e. Other _____

Why? _____

16. Term Length – Currently, New York State legislators are elected to a two-year term.

Would you support a constitutional amendment that would increase in the length of a term to four years?

Yes No Why? _____ Yes No Why? _____

17. Term Limits – Currently New York State legislators are not subject to term limits, which means they can run for an unlimited number of two-year terms. Should legislators be subject to term limits?

Yes No

Why? _____

How many total years of service should a legislator be limited to?

Yes No

Why? _____

How many total years of service should a legislator be limited to?

18. Supporting small businesses is a priority of mine, and I frequently hear about the need for regulatory reforms to remove onerous burdens on small businesses to allow them to grow and succeed. What do you think is the biggest impediment for small businesses and why?

19. The unfortunate reality of the opioid/heroin epidemic is that many of us have been touched by it in some shape or form. What obstacles do you see in prevention, treatment, and recovery? What if any thoughts do you have on how we can be more effective in battling this growing problem?

20. The world of media has changed rapidly just in the past few decades. Today, what is your primary source for reading the news or receiving information? Please choose just one.

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. Instagram | <input type="checkbox"/> g. Radio | <input type="checkbox"/> a. Instagram | <input type="checkbox"/> g. Radio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. X (Twitter) | <input type="checkbox"/> h. Podcasts | <input type="checkbox"/> b. X (Twitter) | <input type="checkbox"/> h. Podcasts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. Facebook | <input type="checkbox"/> i. YouTube | <input type="checkbox"/> c. Facebook | <input type="checkbox"/> i. YouTube |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> e. Newspapers | <input type="checkbox"/> k. Snapchat | <input type="checkbox"/> e. Newspapers | <input type="checkbox"/> k. Snapchat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> f. Television | <input type="checkbox"/> l. Other _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> f. Television | <input type="checkbox"/> l. Other _____ |

21. Which specific source of news do you trust the most? Some examples include: Friends on social media, influencers on social media, Major news outlets (e.g. ABC, Fox News, MSNBC, CNN), local news (print or digital). Please be as specific as possible.

22. New York has faced budget deficits in the past and has lost population in the last few years. In those last few years, personal income tax increased for individuals making more than \$1 million and taxes increased on corporations whose business income was more than \$5 million. Should New York raise taxes on the income of multi-millionaires, billionaires, and tax the assets of the ultra-wealthy to boost revenue for state programs (i.e. Medicaid, Pre-K to K-12 education, transportation, etc.)?

- Yes No Why? _____ Yes No Why? _____

23. Please share any thoughts on what issues are important to you that you would like to see addressed in the 2025 session.

New York State Assembly • Albany, New York 12248

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Assemblymember

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