



Assemblymember PATRICIA A. FAHY

Legislative Updates – 109th Assembly District

SUMMER 2017



New Excelsior Scholarship FAQs

The new Excelsior Scholarship program has attracted a great deal of attention, and many students and families still have questions about the new program. This program is designed to make tuition cost-free at SUNY and CUNY schools for middle class families. The application period opened June 15th, and closed July 21st. It will be open earlier in the year for the 2018-2019 academic year. Below are some FAQs on the program you may find helpful:

- What does it mean to be a “NYS resident” for purposes of receiving this award?**
You must have resided in New York State for 12 continuous months prior to the term for which the award is being sought.
- How much income can my family earn to be eligible for an award?**
For the 2017-18 academic year, your 2015 household federal adjusted gross income can total up to \$100,000 to be eligible. New York State families can earn up to \$110,000 beginning in 2018-19, and up to \$125,000 in 2019-20 and thereafter.
- When do I begin fulfilling my residency requirement?**
The post-award residency requirement begins when you are no longer receiving an award. You will have up to six months after your last award payment has been made before you must live in NYS to fulfill the residency requirement. If you have lost eligibility for the award and are continuing with your undergraduate studies at a NYS college, your residency requirement would begin while you are still in school.
- Will my scholarship convert to a loan if I move out of New York State?**
If you move out, your award will be prorated when calculating your loan amount. Any balance you may owe after leaving NYS will convert to an interest-free loan. If you received awards for four years and reside in NYS for three years, you will be required to repay one-fourth of the award as a no-interest loan. If you relocated due to an allowable hardship, your loan conversion may be waived.

www.hesc.ny.gov is a helpful resource for any more questions on the Excelsior Scholarship, and on the Enhanced Tuition Scholarship for private schools students!

Dear Neighbors,

I am honored to continue to represent you in the New York State Assembly and to continue to work for each of you in Albany, Bethlehem, Guelderland, and New Scotland. This edition of the Legislative and Community report includes updates on this year’s legislative session’s accomplishments, and where we still have more work. I’ve also included a special feature called **Trails Across the Capital District** — which contains updates on our region’s robust network of trails, along with exciting plans emerging in the 109th district in the near future.



Recognizing Small Business. Small businesses like Cheesecake Machismo continue to be the driving force of our Upstate economy. Cheesecake Machismo was rated the best cheesecake in New York State by Yelp! reviewers. Assemblywoman Fahy stopped by to congratulate them and enjoy a piece of chocolate chip cheesecake!

Highlights of Assemblymember Fahy Sponsored Bills Passed this Year

Master’s in Education Teacher Incentive Scholarship. One priority of Assemblymember Fahy’s for the end of session was passing her bill from last year to allow the Master’s in Education Teacher Incentive Scholarship Program to be used at *both public and private colleges and universities*. The legislature was successful in getting this bill passed in June with strong bipartisan support and anxiously await the Governor’s signature. This scholarship offers awards at private and public colleges and universities in an amount up to the equivalent of the annual tuition charged at SUNY colleges for state residents seeking to become master’s educated teachers. Currently, these award recipients must enroll in full-time study in an approved master’s degree in education program at a SUNY school of higher education, so this will be a significant increase in education options for teachers seeking their master’s degrees!

Albany School Board Election Date to Conform with the Rest of NYS. In June, the legislature passed a bill Assemblymember Fahy sponsored with Senator Breslin to change the date of the election for Albany City School District board members from November to the 3rd Tuesday in May, the day of their school budget vote. Prior to this legislation, the Albany School District was the only district in the state which voted on a budget in May, yet did not elect school board members until November. This left new school board members at a disadvantage, and lessened their ability to plan for the district without the full knowledge of what was included in their adopted budget. These provisions would align the district’s fiscal and academic cycle with the process for electing and installing new members of their governance team.

Major General Harold Greene Highway in Guelderland. One of the bills Assemblymember Fahy was most proud of this legislative session is to name a portion of Route 146 in honor of the late Major General Harold Greene—who was tragically the first American General to be killed by combat fire since the September 11th attacks.

Major General Harold Greene grew up in Guelderland, and spent a 34-year career serving in the U.S. military. He joined the ROTC while studying at RPI to fulfill a physical education requirement, but quickly took to military life, eventually achieving the rank of Major General. Maj. Gen. Greene made the ultimate sacrifice in 2014.

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Assemblymember Fahy Sponsored Bills Passed this Year *(continued)*

Promoting NY Craft Beverages via Distilleries. Craft beverage production has grown exponentially in the Capital Region in just the last few years. A bill Assemblymember Fahy introduced with Senator Amedore and passed in June encourages cross collaboration between NYS distilleries, wineries, cideries, and breweries. This legislation gives farm distilleries parity with other farm craft beverage producers in New York State, by allowing them to serve NYS craft beers, wines, and ciders as their farm brewery, winery, and cidery counterparts are currently permitted to do. Assemblymember Fahy advocates often for this Upstate growth industry, and this is the third bill Assemblymember Fahy has successfully sponsored in three years!



Honoring the League of Women Voters. Barbara Bartoletti stepped down as the LWW's Legislative Director this year after many years of being an omnipresent figure at the Capitol. Assemblymembers Fahy and John McDonald along with Senator Jim Tedisco presented her with a proclamation in recognition of her extraordinary years of service.

Updates from the End of the 2017 Legislative Session

Inter-Municipal Water Infrastructure Funding. An additional \$30 million allocation in the state's new Inter-Municipal Water Infrastructure Grant (IMG) is an outgrowth of my legislation modeled on the Albany Pool communities' CSO Long Term Control Plan that created incentives for municipalities to share resources/services for greater effectiveness and cost savings.

The six municipalities including Albany that comprise the Albany Pool Communities may reap the benefit if their \$10 million IMG grant application is selected to create a screening and treatment facility aimed at reducing sewage discharge into the Hudson River. The Town of Guilderland will also be applying for \$1.5 million in IMG funding to both strengthen water system infrastructure and coordinate with the Town of Rotterdam for access to its plentiful water supply for both Guilderland and surrounding communities.

Child Marriage Ban. In June, the legislature passed a bill raising the minimum age for marriage in New York from 14 to 17, a long overdue reform. This legislation takes critical steps in abolishing any possibility of marriage for 14-, 15- and 16-year-olds. For 17-year-olds to marry, it will now require court approval.

Buy American Act. The New York Buy American Act passed overwhelmingly to require that contracts over \$1 million awarded by various state agencies utilize American steel and iron with limited exemptions. By supporting state and national manufacturers, the bill ensures that taxpayer-funded projects reinvest in our economy and local communities and create good jobs.



Healthcare Reform Protest. The proposed federal healthcare reform presents a serious risk to all New Yorkers, nearly one million of which stand to lose health insurance under the law. I stood with the NYS Nurses Association and Citizen Action NY to voice my opposition to the proposal.

Kendra's Law. An extension of *Kendra's Law*, which allows New York courts to order assisted outpatient mental health treatment (AOT), was passed overwhelmingly. The law establishes a procedure for obtaining such court-ordered assisted outpatient treatment for certain people with mental illness who, in view of their treatment history and present circumstances, are unlikely to survive safely in the community without supervision.

E-Cigarette Indoor Ban (Clean Indoor Air Act.) The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Surgeon General have raised concerns about e-cigarette vapor emissions, which have been found to be laced with nicotine, a habit forming substance, and also include dangerous chemicals such as diethylene glycol benzene, a volatile organic compound, and heavy metals. A new e-cigarette prohibition bill was passed by the legislature in June with the aim to protect the health of New Yorkers from these relatively new devices, along with explaining the potential health risks they pose to users.

Cancer Coverage for Volunteer Firefighters. Under the recently passed New York State Volunteer Firefighter Enhanced Cancer Disability Benefits Act, all fire districts, departments, or companies would be required to provide and maintain an enhanced cancer disability benefit insurance program for each eligible volunteer firefighter. Firefighters, and especially volunteer firefighters, who previously were not guaranteed healthcare coverage, are at much higher risk for cancer. This new law ensures that those who volunteer to protect our communities receive healthcare benefits for this disease which can be connected to their service. The bill awaits the Governor's signature.

Honored by the NYS Bar

In May, Assemblymember Fahy was honored to receive the NYS Bar Association's Excellence in Mandated Representation Award for her work over the last couple of years to pass reforms to the Indigent Legal Services program, which was successfully included in this year's budget. Previously, Indigent Legal Services were vastly unequal across the state, which resulted in overburdened public defenders and inadequate legal resources for those accused of crimes. These reforms are designed to shift the burden of indigent legal services from the counties to the state and established strict case load limits for public defenders. Previously the bill passed unanimously by both houses of the legislature in 2016. While the bill was vetoed by the Governor on New Year's Eve of 2016, it became a priority to include in the budget, ending the county-to-county patchwork system of justice in New York State.



Film Screening on the Early Women's Movement. Mary Dore, a documentary filmmaker and director of "She's Beautiful When She's Angry," joined Assemblywoman Fahy and 19 other woman legislators for a screening of the film at Madison Theater in Albany. The film, which is available on Netflix, highlights the Women's Movement of the 60's and 70's.



First NYS Ramadan Celebration. The Capital Region is home to a robust Muslim community. Assemblymember Fahy was a proud sponsor of the first ever NYS Legislative Celebration of Ramadan, joining several Capital Region representatives in welcoming more than 300 Muslims and community members to the NYS Capitol for this event in May.

Trails Across The Capital District

New York's history has been marked by trails for centuries, from paths forged by Iroquois scouts and warriors and the famous Erie Canal to the newly-funded Empire State Trail, which will be the longest multi-use trail in the United States once completed. The Capital Region is home to many bike paths and hiking trails that continue to enhance our region to this day; and towns and villages across the 109th Assembly District are taking on exciting new projects to further connect our communities and grow local small businesses.

Economic Impact of Trails. In addition to the many community health benefits, trails have serious economic benefits for businesses and communities. Property values within one block of the Indianapolis Cultural Trail, for example, increased 148% once it was built. The \$63 million public and private investment leveraged \$1 billion in additional assessed property value. The Erie Canal Trail, which stretches from Albany to Buffalo, is estimated to have an annual economic impact of \$253 million on the counties it goes through, and supports 3,440 jobs.

200th Anniversary of the Erie Canal. The Erie Canal is marking its bicentennial this year with events across Upstate. Right here in the Capital Region, the NYS Museum will be marking the anniversary with a new exhibit called *Enterprising Waters: New York's Erie Canal*. The exhibit will open on September 16th, and will use unique artifacts—including a



Bike to Work Day. Bike trails and paths are some of the Capital Region's most valuable assets. Assemblymember Fahy participated in this year's "Bike to Work Day" sponsored by the Mohawk-Hudson Land Conservancy in Delmar.

giant mechanism used to load cargo ships on the canal—to tell the story of the canal and its lasting impact on New York State.

Empire State Trail. The newly-approved Empire State Trail will stretch from Albany to Buffalo and from New York City to Canada. At 750 miles, the trail will be the longest multi-use trail in the United States. The trail will complete the Erie Canal Trail and will connect to the Capital Region's network of trails. This will help the Capital Region's network of trails develop a truly statewide reach—and make them part of the largest network of multi-use trails in the country!

Coming Soon to a Town Near You: New Trails

Guilfordland: The town of Guilfordland is working with the state Department of Transportation on creating a better bike environment through dedicated bike lanes. At a recent meeting Assemblymember Fahy had with DOT officials they discussed the scheduled paving of Route 20 from the Northway to the City line and the planned devotion of space for a dedicated bike lane. Plans are also underway to connect the rail trail in Voorheesville with the Erie Canal Trail in Rotterdam—which will help further enhance our region's trails by creating a regional trail network. To that end, Assemblywoman Fahy has helped secure state grants for paving bicycle lanes in the rights of way of town roads. A grant has been secured from Hudson River Greenway to help with planning.

Bethlehem: The town's "Art on the Trail" volunteer committee has announced plans to install several murals on the Mohawk-Hudson trail, the first being on the corner of Adams and Hudson in Delmar. In August, three finalists will be selected, and community members will be invited to share input on the proposed mural, which will be completed by October 2017.

New Scotland: Exciting developments are underway in the portion of the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike trail that passes through Voorheesville. Albany County has announced plans to pave the portion of the trail which stretches from Voorheesville to Slingerlands, which are expected to be completed in 2018.

Albany: The Mohawk-Hudson and the Albany County Rail Trail both run through Albany's South End, but have never connected because of highway infrastructure. The Mohawk Hudson Trail terminates near the USS Slater, and the Albany County Rail Trail ends near the Port of Albany. Assemblymember Fahy has designated state funding to the City of Albany to connect the two paths.

City planners have proposed a two-lane bicycle track along the east side of South Pearl Street, which will be divided into three sections. Construction is slated to start in spring of 2018.

CDPHP Cycle Launches. Bike Share programs around the country have helped many take advantage of the tourism and health benefits of bike riding and trails. CDPHP and CDTA are partnering to launch **CDPHP Cycle**, the first bike share program in Capital Region, and plans for the program's launch are scheduled for August. The bike share will have locations in Albany, Schenectady, Saratoga Springs and Troy with a planned extension for next year.



Community and Events

Altamont Museum in the Streets

Altamont's new "Museum in the Streets" aims to bring history to life in the historic village in Guilfordland. In 2014 Assemblymember Fahy helped secure a grant for this project, which installed panels with information near 26 historic sites in the village, some of which date back to the Revolutionary War era. A larger panel in Orsini Park shows a map of the village with the locations of the panels, such as the Altamont Reformed Church, the Dietz Bottling Company, and the Knowersville House.

Summer Reading Opportunities

Kids do better in school when they read over the summer — even if it's for just 10 minutes a day! To combat the "summer slide," there are library events throughout the Capital Region including the Albany Public Library, Altamont Free Library, Bethlehem Public Reading, Guilfordland Public Library, and Voorheesville Public Library. For more information about summer reading at your local library, visit: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/summer/>

More Work Ahead!

Despite an extraordinary session bringing the legislature back in June, more work remains to be done. Below are the highlights of a few major bills that were not finalized this session.

Campaign Finance LLC Loophole. An ongoing priority in the Assembly is legislation to close the Limited Liability Corporation (LLC) loophole in the state's campaign finance laws in order to bring greater transparency and accountability to elections for public office in New York State. The bill passed the Assembly this session, but has remained in committee in the Senate. Unfortunately, LLCs have been exploited in ways that have resulted in a near limitless amount of campaign contributions to candidates. Assemblymember Fahy fully supports this measure to bring greater accountability to campaigns in New York, and will continue to advocate for its implementation next session.

Child Victims Act. The Child Victims Act would extend statutes of limitations for criminal and civil cases involving sexual abuse of children to allow these victims to seek legal recourse as adults. Under the legislation, in cases involving a felony sex crime against a minor that have a statute of limitations for criminal prosecution, the limitations period would not commence until the victim turns 23. Another significant provision of this bill would provide a one-year look-back window for adult survivors who, under current law, are not able to seek recourse by civil action. The Assembly passed this bill in June; however, action was not taken in the Senate.

Community and Climate Protection Act. Climate change is real and serious, and it represents a serious threat to NYS, to say nothing of its global consequences. The Assembly passed the New York State Climate and Community Protection Act, which implements the state's 2030 clean energy goals, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, invests in green energy projects and provides support to disadvantaged communities across the state. While this bill did pass with strong support in the Assembly, it did not move in the Senate. If this bill were to pass, it would help elevate New York's place as a leader on combating climate change. Assemblymember Fahy will continue to advocate strongly for this legislation and more to combat climate change.



Climate Change is a serious and growing environmental threat faced by society today. Assemblywoman Fahy addresses local climate activists on the need for the states to act on climate change in the face of federal inaction and external opposition.



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