



ASSEMBLYWOMAN

Carrie Woerner

Dear friends,

Summer is here and with it comes blueberry picking on local farms, ice cream cones at one of the many local creameries, outdoor music, hiking and biking on trails and backroads, and of course the county fairs! I am looking forward to enjoying all that our region has to offer this summer.

The first half of the year has been a busy time for me, filled with both constituent work in the district and time in Albany for the legislative session. This newsletter will catch you up on what I have accomplished for Saratoga County families.

As always, my door is open to assist you with any problems or concerns you may have or to discuss legislative issues. Have a great summer, and I hope to see you at one of the many wonderful summer events or destinations here in New York.

Best regards,

ASSEMBLYWOMAN
Carrie Woerner



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Student Advisory Board



Members of my 2021-2022 Student Advisory Board joined me in the state Capitol on May 24 for our final meeting of the year. The board, comprised of high school and college students from across the district, met quarterly for discussions on the issues that were on their minds and to give me feedback on budget priorities and pieces of legislation up for consideration during the legislative session.

A big THANK YOU to all of the outstanding young people who participated this year: Ryan Keenan (Hudson Falls High School); Aiden Gillis (Salem-Washington Academy); Quinn Donaldson (Salem-Washington Academy); Molly Egan (Saratoga Springs High School); Frank Laniewski (Saratoga Springs High School); Q Krahling (Schuylerville High School); Rebecca Dawson (South Glens Falls High School); Michel Ghorayeb (Stillwater High School); Elizabeth Whitney (Waldorf School); Gabriela Garafalo (Waldorf School); Zachary Zeh (SUNY Adirondack); Anna Aubrey (Argyle Junior/Senior High School); Jillian Fernau (Ballston Spa High School); Leo Jordan (Greenwich Junior/Senior High School); Matthew Bink (Greenwich Junior/Senior High School); and Maria Bideiwy (Skidmore College).

Maternal Health Round Table

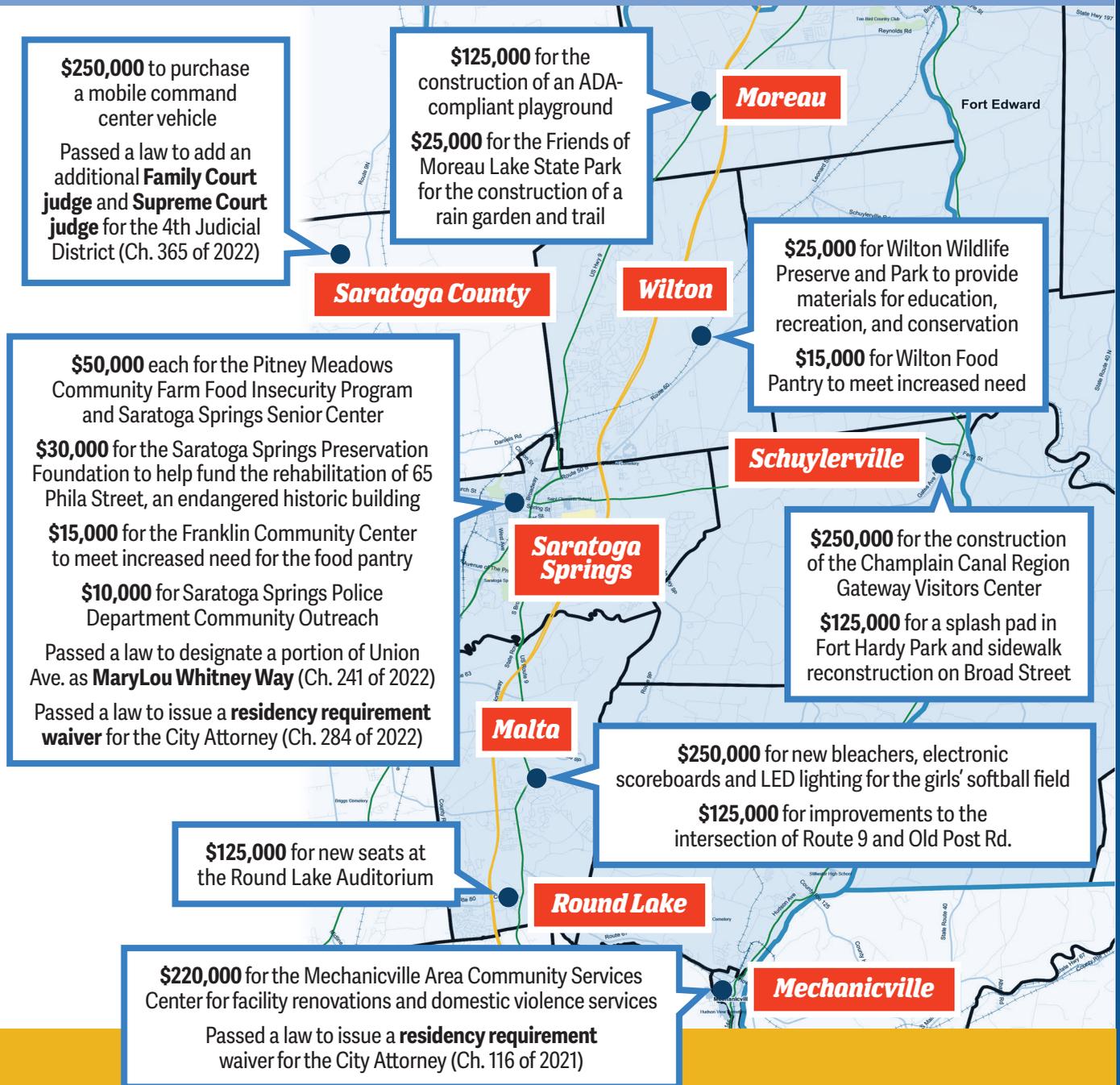
A discussion at the Round Lake Post Office with Cecily Cullinan, a post-partum doula, about maternal mental health and the high instances of maternal mortality among women in rural counties led to a roundtable held over Zoom with a group of New York midwives, doulas, and obstetricians. The conversation ranged from discussing **the need to raise awareness about the mental health issues new mothers can experience, to the need for expanded professional education on these issues, to insurance coverage issues, including paid family leave and telehealth payment parity.** There are several pieces of legislation dealing with maternal health that I've co-sponsored. Additionally, legislation I sponsored requiring telehealth payment parity was included in the 2022-2023 state budget. I'll continue to prioritize these issues and fight to address this significant healthcare problem in our rural communities.



Pictured (clockwise): Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner; Nicole Clarke, Legislative Director; Cecily Cullinan; Trisha Graham; Dr. Jennifer Lefner; Kathryn Mitchell; Christine Hernandez; Karen Wacenheim; and Aimee Woodhouse.

Delivering for Saratoga County Families

I secured funding and passed legislation to support our local communities, including:



Public Safety

My goal going into this session was to work on restoring a fair and functional criminal justice system that will help keep our communities safe. Throughout 2021, I met with law enforcement, district attorneys, and judges to identify problems with our criminal justice system after the bail reforms of 2019 and identify what the solutions might be. Working closely with other upstate Assembly members, **we secured important changes to our laws to provide more judicial discretion in bail decisions, prevent the shorter discovery deadlines from resulting in dismissal of charges, and ensure upstate district attorneys have the funding necessary to effectively do their work.** Specifically:

- All crimes involving possession of an illegal firearm are now bail eligible
- Second and subsequent offenses are now bail eligible, regardless of whether the second offense is in the same jurisdiction as the first
- Judges may now consider a broader set of criteria when setting a securing order (such as for bail):
 - Defendant's past history and activities
 - Criminal conviction record

- Whether an individual is alleged to have caused serious harm to an individual or group of individuals
- Previous record with respect to flight (non-return to court)
- Ability to pay

The District Attorneys Association of the State of New York supported the changes that were made, saying that, "**This year's budget demonstrates a willingness towards finding solutions to protect victims and to ensure the safety of all of New York State's businesses, residents and visitors.**"

In response to the mass shootings in Buffalo and Uvalde, the Legislature passed a series of laws. The bill package included measures I supported to strengthen New York's Red Flag Law and combat online hate. I also helped pass "Alyssa's Law" to require each school district to consider adding panic buttons wired into the 911 system (Ch. 227 of 2022). The implementation of this alert would allow for immediate police response in local schools to keep kids and teachers safe.

Legislative Session Highlights

Last November, I invited community members to participate in my constituent survey and more than 1,000 people took part and identified the following top budget priorities: K-12 Education; Bridge and Road Infrastructure; Water and Sewer Infrastructure; Workforce Development; Housing; Health Care/Opioid/Heroin; Environment; and Local Gov't/Property Tax Relief. I am pleased to report that:

- ✓ Our local **schools and libraries** will see increased funding.
- ✓ The budget included **significant investment in infrastructure** – both bridge/road and water/sewer.
- ✓ People enrolling in a community college program to earn a new credential in order to get a better job will now be eligible for a **part-time Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) grant**, making it more affordable for people to invest in their own career development.
- ✓ There is a **new tax credit program to accelerate growth and hiring in the video and digital game development industry**, a cluster of which is emerging in Saratoga Springs and the greater Capital Region. Capital Region BOCES, Hudson Valley Community College, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), and SUNY Albany all currently offer programs in this field.
- ✓ **Funding for homelessness prevention** and affordable rental and single-family homes has been included in a new five-year housing plan.
- ✓ Legislation I introduced to **support home repairs for low-income seniors** passed in the Assembly and Senate with bipartisan support (A.10271)
- ✓ Legislation I sponsored **requiring telehealth payment parity** was included in the 2022-2023 budget.
- ✓ This year's budget included **\$100 million over two years to increase the availability of mental health services in schools**.
- ✓ Legislation I supported passed in both houses to **permit seniors to retain their eligibility in the Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) program** if they previously qualified but were deemed no longer eligible because of an increase in a public or private pension or Social Security benefit (A.928).
- ✓ **Funding for the Environmental Protection Fund was expanded**, including increases for land conservation programs.
- ✓ Homeowners earning less than \$250,000 who are enrolled in the STAR or Enhanced STAR program were mailed **property rebate checks** starting in June, which are continuing to be mailed out.
- ✓ A **gas tax holiday** has been established from June 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022, to provide some relief from high gas prices.
- ✓ A planned **middle-class tax cut was accelerated** to the lowest rate in 70 years.
- ✓ For low-income families, the **Earned Income Tax Credit has been increased**, and for families with children, there is an expanded **Child Tax Credit**.
- ✓ This year's budget **shifts ongoing costs away from Saratoga County to the state for flood control** of the Hudson River/Black River Regulating District, a change likely to result in reduced taxes across local communities.

In total, I passed 18 bills through both the Assembly and Senate, 11 of which have already been signed into law. For more information about other legislation and state budget, please visit my website: <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Carrie-Woerner>.

The New York Textile Act

The centerpiece of my legislative work this year is the New York Textile Act. It passed through both houses and is now awaiting the Governor's signature. Textiles are a growing industry and sustainably produced natural fiber textiles made from hemp or the fleece of sheep and alpacas – like the ones we produce here in the 113th Assembly District – comprise the fastest growing segment of the industry. Textile buyers are largely comprised of New York based fashion companies; there are more than 900 fashion companies headquartered in New York City. This industry represents a significant opportunity for farmers and textile manufacturers for our region and I am determined to ensure that the state helps accelerate that growth.

Working with local fiber farmers, fiber mills, and production weaving and knitting companies, I developed this comprehensive legislation to add

New York produced animal and plant fiber-based textiles to the state's economic development, state procurement, and Department of Agriculture & Markets promotional programs (A.9649-A). As a way of featuring quality products and producers in New York, the legislation adds textiles to the agricultural products awards presented each year at the New York State Fair. The legislation also forms the New York Textile Products Council to advise Agriculture & Markets on how to support the animal and plant fiber and textile industry.

Finally, the Empire State Development agency that is responsible for marketing the state to prospective companies will begin to incorporate textile supply chain companies in their efforts to attract businesses to expand into New York. All of these elements together will help make New York a leader in the textile industry once again.

Constituent Service

My staff and I have assisted well over 100 constituents in the first six months of 2022!

We helped a constituent who was unable to obtain a copy of his birth certificate, which he needed to secure his retirement benefits, because at least 50 years ago someone made an error that showed his birthday was just one day earlier than the date on his birth certificate.

We also resolved a payment issue for a farmer selling produce in New York City, helped with school lunch eligibility for a child whose parents lived in two different school districts, and contacted a propane supplier to insist on a delivery during the coldest days of the winter.

NEED HELP?

My staff and I can help you:

- Address COVID-related issues, including unemployment benefits
- Connect with local services and state agencies
- Obtain benefits, government forms, and applications
- Replace lost medals or awards for veterans
- Answer questions about state government
- Get information on programs such as EPIC, HEAP, and STAR



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for a Legislative Update from

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