



Assemblyman
**DAVID I.
WEPRIN**
**Reports to the
Community**

Summer 2010

Dear Friends,

So much in such a short time. We knew the dollars would be tight this budget year and perhaps for some time after. It certainly helped me as a new Assemblyman to be able to draw on my prior experience with the State Banking Department and certainly as Chair of the NYC Council's Finance Committee for eight years. The impasse in Albany that affected us all was derived not just from the state of the economy, but from the state of politics which played a role as it impacted the ability of two institutions to focus full-time on governing.

In the Assembly, I am proud that we remained able to consistently forge coalitions to deliver the votes needed to pass the budget and, before that, difficult budget extenders. It became clear to me from working and living through this process that the next steps will be how to effect meaningful change to keep the partisanship to a minimum. I always stood for a fiscally responsible government; the key will be looking at reforms, including the re-districting which follows the release of the 2010 census data.

While much of the outside focus on Albany revolved around the budget, that impasse did not prevent the passage of important legislation discussed in this report to you. It includes my efforts to halt annual double digit increases in water bills, keep more seniors in their homes, expanded health insurance policies to protect those with autism and protect our children from the impacts of secondhand smoke. A legislator must also serve as a voice for those matters our constituents care deeply about; I stood against allowing terrorist-funded individuals a forum to speak here.

As always, if I can be of help with your state and local concerns, please call, e-mail or write my office. I maintain staff offices in the community and in Albany to serve you. Please take advantage of my offices' resources where we can assist you. And please continue to share your concerns with me.

Sincerely,

David I. Weprin
Member of the Assembly

ASSEMBLY PASSES WEPRIN BILL TO ADDRESS HIGH WATER RATES

Assemblyman David Weprin's legislation (A.11060) to reform the New York City Water Board, which has raised water rates some 700% since its inception, gained traction with its overwhelming 124 to 15 passage by the Assembly (June 24, 2010). Concerned constituents should contact their State Senators to move the bill in that Chamber. Assemblyman Weprin's reform would remove control of the current board from the Mayor by dividing the appointments of the representatives more proportionately: it gives the City Council and the Mayor each three (3) appointments and the City Comptroller one (1) appointment.

Additionally, Assemblyman Weprin's bill removes the Mayor's power to designate the Water Board Chair and transfers that power to the seven (7) members of the board. When adopted, the new composition of the board would help prevent blank-check approvals on water rate hikes.

It would inject greater accountability since the Mayor, Comptroller and City Council would all face responsibility on rate decisions. Assemblyman Weprin noted that businesses and community groups argued that the 12.9% rate hike effective July 1, 2010, was unwarranted and unnecessary; the Water Board could have taken other steps to avoid any increase in the water rates this year. High water rates can impact affordability for homeowners, condo and co-op owners, businesses, tenants and their landlords. Effectively, a rate hike acts as a tax hike imposed without a legislative vote.

ASSEMBLY PROTECTS CHILDREN FROM SECONDHAND SMOKE IN VEHICLES

Assemblyman Weprin recognizes the need to protect our young from exposure to the harmful impacts of secondhand smoke and bring about a healthier and smoke-free borough. As the session wound down, Weprin worked with his colleagues in the Assembly to overwhelmingly pass legislation A.6714 (Mayersohn/Weprin) to ban smoking in vehicles when children under the age of fourteen (14) are present. Weprin lauds the bill as a step towards a smoke-free society. Assemblyman Weprin, who believes it is vital to protect our children from smoking, recently joined with colleagues in government to launch the Queens Smoke-Free Partnership. Funded through a grant from the New York State Department of Health, it is the first Queens-based group created to reduce smoking throughout our borough. An astonishing 6,000 children and adolescents living in Queens currently smoke cigarettes; sadly, one-third of these children and adolescents will die prematurely as a direct result of smoking. The Queens Smoke-Free Partnership works to promote a tobacco-free society by helping people quit smoking and increasing the number of outdoor spaces that are smoke free.

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Assemblyman David Weprin joined with Queens Borough President Helen Marshall, Assemblymembers Nettie Mayersohn and Grace Meng, and Program Director of Queens-Smoke-Free Partnership Dan Carrigan to launch the organization on March 19, 2010.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEPRIN MAKES A DIFFERENCE FOR OUR KIDS

The New York State Assembly, in their budget, restored hundreds of millions of dollars in additional funding for our public schools. In addition, the Assembly passed legislation supported by Assemblyman Weprin so that New York can qualify for up to \$700 million dollars in education funding from Washington, DC. With our state facing huge budget gaps this money is needed now more than ever.



Assemblyman David Weprin with Legislative Intern Tiffany Brown during Mock Legislative Session.



Assemblyman Weprin with Education Commissioner David Steiner discussing education legislation.

Tiffany Brown, Legislative Intern in Albany, took part in the 2010 New York State Assembly Internship. Its comprehensive academic program gives qualified students a chance to work in the Assembly performing the same functions as legislative staffers. A resident of Queens Village, Tiffany is a senior at Queens College with a double major in Political Science and Urban Studies. She would like to have a career in public service sometime in the future. She plans to continue her studies by earning a Masters Degree in Public Policy/Urban Planning. "Tiffany has been a great help in the Albany office, as well as serving the needs of 24th A.D. residents," stated Assemblyman Weprin.

ASSEMBLY PRESERVES FREE METROCARDS FOR STUDENTS

WEPRIN SLAMS MTA FOR ABANDONING QUEENS BUS RIDERS

The Assembly intervened to make sure that the more than 500,000 New York City students continue to receive free and reduced fares to ride the buses and subways to attend their schools. “My Assembly colleagues and I fought hard to preserve student MetroCards because we believe that students simply should not have to pay to get to school every day,” said Assemblyman Weprin. Many families do not have any room in their already-tight budgets to provide children with daily transit fare.

Assemblyman Weprin sharply criticized the MTA for abandoning Queens transit riders by shutting down several bus lines. Instead of cutting bureaucratic waste, the MTA left many straphangers with-

out any transit alternative. “These buses provide a life line to seniors, working families, students, and small businesses,” said Assemblyman Weprin.

“We are working to restore essential bus lines,” stated Assemblyman Weprin. This includes the Q79 (Little Neck Parkway from Little Neck through Glen Oaks, Bellerose, and Floral Park) and the Q75 (runs between the heart of Oakland Gardens and the Jamaica terminal) and reduced service on other bus lines including the Q30, Q31, and Q76.

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WEPRIN LEGISLATION TO HELP MORE SENIORS STAY IN THEIR HOMES

Assemblyman Weprin has a history of promoting legislation to help seniors stay in their homes. “Affordability remains an important factor and I am pleased that the Assembly approved legislation to expand eligibility in the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) Program,” said Assemblyman Weprin. SCRIE offers eligible tenants in rent controlled or rent stabilized apartments an exemption from rent increases. When a landlord raises the rent, tenants protected by SCRIE do not have to pay the increased rate. The program provides real property tax abatement to landlords to offset the value of the rent increase.

Assemblyman Weprin worked with Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz to pass A.9516, which excludes medical expenses not reimbursed by health insurance from the definition of income when determining eligibility for the SCRIE program.

For many seniors, the growing cost of medical treatment and prescription drugs not covered by insurance companies can be a financial burden. Many seniors live on a fixed income and these costs seriously affect their standard of living.

WEPRIN BILL IMPROVES PUBLIC SAFETY

Weprin co-sponsored a measure to enhance the police’s ability to investigate shootings. A.6468 (Schimel/Weprin), overwhelmingly passed in the NYS Assembly, would require semiautomatic pistols manufactured or delivered to a licensed dealer in this state microstamp bullets upon firing. This ensures that when a gun is fired, information identifying the make, model and serial number of the gun gets stamped onto the cartridge. This empowers police investigators to link firearms to crimes by looking at cartridge cases found at a crime scene.

WEPRIN, LEADERS ASK STATE DEPARTMENT TO REVIEW FLOTILLA SPEAKERS FOR TERRORIST “CREDENTIALS”



On June 14, 2010, Assemblyman Weprin and several of his colleagues in government joined with concerned community leaders, including Janice Shorenstein and Rabbi Michael Miller of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York (JCRC), in Times Square to call on the U.S. State Department to investigate participants in the Gaza flotilla who planned to come to the U.S. for a pro-Palestine/anti-Israel speaking tour. JCRC presented a petition with more than 23,000 signatures, which was subsequently delivered to the State Department by Congressional members Eliot Engel, Carolyn Maloney, Jerold Nadler, Charles Rangel, and Anthony Wiener; Borough President Scott Stringer and Council Speaker Christine Quinn also joined our rally. “Our sole purpose,” stated Assemblyman Weprin, “is to focus the State Department on the need to review any affiliation of these flotilla participants with the terrorist aligned group, IHH, that funded the provocative array of ships with the sole purpose of putting people in harm’s way.”

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—Assemblyman Weprin

GUARANTEEING INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR AUTISM

The cost of caring for a child with unique health care needs can be staggering. With the adoption of Weprin's legislation, parents can be certain their autistic child will receive the coverage they need to treat this serious developmental disorder. A.10372-A (Morelle/Weprin) requires accident and health insurance policies to provide lifetime coverage for the screening, diagnosis and treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This historic measure closes a significant gap in insurance coverage for individuals and families affected by autism.

Current ASD coverage requirements remain unclear; it leaves parents uncertain whether their insurance provider will cover their child's medical care. Weprin's legislation eliminates the guesswork and provides families with peace of mind in seeking essential treatment for their autistic child.

The Assembly's legislation also addresses concerns related to the availability of health insurance for autism, including which types of medical care are appropriate and safe for the treatment of ASD. The legislation directs the Commissioner of Health, in consultation with the Superintendent of Insurance and the Commissioners of the Office of Mental Health and Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, to identify and require minimum treatment and therapy coverage levels that are evidence-based, peer-reviewed and clinically proven.

"I am proud to continue and build on my prior advocacy in the NYC Council where I sponsored initiatives for After School and Summer Programs for children on the autism spectrum," stated Assemblyman Weprin. "This new historic state legislation will make a difference for families affected by autism."



Archbishop Timothy Dolan recently met in Albany with Assemblyman Weprin.



Assemblyman Weprin with Captain Daryl Mazlish at a car wash to benefit the South Bayside-Jamaica Estates-Holliswood Volunteer Ambulance Corps.



Assemblyman Weprin discusses legislation with colleague Adrianno Espaillat and Lt. Governor Richard Ravitch.



Assemblyman David I. Weprin and NOOPURA dancers who performed at his Community Inauguration, May 16, 2010.



Senator Charles Schumer swears in Assemblyman Weprin as his family looks on.

ASSEMBLYMAN DAVID I. WEPRIN

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