



ASSEMBLYMAN
Michael Cusick



Update from Albany

SUMMER 2015

Dear Friend:

I am writing to keep you updated on what I have worked on in Albany as well as issues and information relevant for you at home. As your representative I continue to work hard to address the problems facing our community. The 2015 legislative session resulted in many significant accomplishments for New Yorkers and I want to keep you informed of our work on your behalf.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact my district office at (718) 370-1384 or by email at cusickm@assembly.state.ny.us. We are always available and ready to assist you.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Cusick
Member of Assembly
District 63



2015 Session Update

Securing millions for our schools:

The Assembly was able to obtain \$250 million in mandated services reimbursement for New York’s non-public schools, a major victory for these institutions and the children they serve. Additionally, \$1 billion was dedicated in this year’s budget for Foundation Aid to New York’s public schools as well as an additional \$456 million in restoration to the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA), pursuant to the commitment required by the Campaign for Fiscal Equity settlement. (A.8323/S.6012)



Assemblyman Cusick debates on the floor of the Assembly.

Stopping the Growth of Prescription Drug Abuse:

Assemblyman Cusick authored a bill (A.7427-A) which ensures that abuse-deterrent opioids are prescribed whenever possible, putting New York at the forefront of this movement in the United States. In addition to the establishment of Cusick’s I-STOP prescription drug database law in 2012, this bill which also passed the Senate, is a critical component in the fight against prescription drug abuse. Now there is no reason why a potentially addictive drug should be prescribed when an abuse-deterrent option is available. (A.7427-A/S.5170-A)

Reforming the Port Authority:

Assemblyman Cusick was the chief co-sponsor of a bill that will bring much needed transparency and accountability to the agency that is so vital to the lives of Staten Islanders. With the ongoing construction on the Bayonne Bridge and the coming replacement of the Goethals Bridge and Outerbridge Crossing, it is critical that the Port Authority functions at the highest level. The bill mandates meetings and hearings be open to the public, includes a rotating panel of commissioners to fight against corruption, and prohibits any conflicts of interest that may arise during a Port Authority project. (A.8298/S.5998)

Verrazano-Narrows Bridge Toll Relief

In this year's budget Assemblyman Cusick fought to ensure the continuance of long-awaited toll relief on the Verrazano Bridge for Staten Island residents and commercial drivers with New York State E-ZPass tags. The final 2015-2016 budget agreement includes \$10.3 million for this discount. The Staten Island resident rate is \$5.50 per crossing with E-ZPass and the commercial discount will remain intact. Senator Lanza and Assemblyman Cusick negotiated the deal with the Governor's Office and respective leaders in each house and were once again instrumental in making sure that this discount continues.



Assemblyman Cusick announces the toll discount plan for the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

Reminder: Goethals, Bayonne and Outerbridge Crossing Toll Relief

Currently, the cash toll on these crossings is \$14. Assemblyman Cusick and Senator Lanza have crafted a plan which gives E-ZPass holders a reduced toll on their third trip over New Jersey spans in a 30-day period. Once the third

trip is taken, the first two trips will be rolled back to \$6.00.

Islanders who want to participate in the three-trip plan should go to panynj.gov, visit the NY E-ZPass Customer Service Center in Travis, or call E-ZPass at (800) 333-8655.

Working for Staten Island

- Together with Senator Andrew Lanza, Assemblyman Cusick has brought much needed attention to the tragic drug epidemic facing Staten Island. On multiple occasions, Cusick and Lanza have partnered to host an opiate overdose prevention and identification events. These seminars, which educate Islanders on how to tell if someone may be experiencing an overdose and how to administer Naxalone or "Narcan," are an indispensable tool for anyone with the chance to save a life.
- Assemblyman Cusick has secured \$627,000 for the Tackling Youth Substance Abuse program administered by the Staten Island Partnership for Community Wellness located on St. Mark's Place in St. George. The program serves families & youth who have been affected by substance abuse and addiction by providing group therapy, individual counseling, access to staff experienced in dealing with these issues and so much more. With this additional funding secured by Cusick, the program will be able to better serve the residents of Staten Island.
- \$250 million was included in the end of session final agreement in mandated services reimbursement for non-public schools, a debt which has been owed for several years. This money represents a significant state-wide commitment to religious and independent schools, helping thousands of children and teachers in the coming years.



Assemblyman Cusick receives the Van Duzer Award from the New York State Troopers Benevolent Association in Manhattan.



Assemblyman Cusick attends the Berry Houses Family Day event.



Assemblyman Cusick discusses issues relating to New York's Catholic schools with Cardinal Dolan in Albany earlier this year.



Assemblyman Cusick attends the groundbreaking for the new Meals on Wheels facility at Sea View.



2015 Legislative Results

During the past legislative session, twenty-one bills authored by Assemblyman Cusick were passed through the Assembly, making him one of the most active legislators in Albany.

Stripping of Pensions from Corrupt Public Officials:

We took the common sense step to strip pensions from representatives who have been convicted of corruption. State representatives are sent to Albany to represent their constituents, not for their own self-advancement. Taxpayers should not continue to fund elected officials who broke the law, and this bill would codify that fact. (A.7704)

- **Granting Home Health Care Workers Emergency Personnel Status:** Assemblyman Cusick sponsored legislation that grants home health care workers emergency personnel status, enabling them to reach their patients during emergencies. In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, many of these aides could not reach their patients and were denied access at police and emergency personnel blockades. This legislation ensures that home health care workers are included in comprehensive emergency management plans, potentially saving lives in the process. The bill was part of a package of bills taken up by the Assembly on Disability Awareness Day. (A.5125-B/S.3482-B)
- **Combating Organized Retail Theft:** Assemblyman Cusick authored legislation which combats the growing problem of organized retail theft. These crime rings, often involving stolen and repackaged goods that are sold back into the marketplace without their original code or expiration dates, have become exceptionally sophisticated. Our outdated penal law has allowed many of the individuals involved to escape prosecution. Frequent targets include infant formula, baby food and high-priced food items like steak and shrimp which are mis-labeled and re-packaged in unsanitary warehouses. Assemblyman Cusick's legislation addresses this problem head on, allowing for all charges in any contiguous counties where the activity took place to be brought against the accused in one criminal court, rather than separate, smaller cases in each county where portions of the criminal activity took place. (A.6503-A/S.3822-A)
- **Establishing a Statewide Physical Fitness Campaign to Encourage Healthy Living:** Sponsored by Assemblyman Cusick, a physical fitness education campaign would be established under this legislation in an effort to combat the obesity epidemic plaguing our country. Obesity related ailments result in the loss of 300,000 American lives and nearly \$100 billion in health-care costs annually. This legislation creates the New York Physical Fitness and Activity Education Campaign, whose mission is to increase awareness regarding the problems associated with obesity and to promote recreational and physical fitness activities within the State of New York. (A. 7022/S.2336)
- **Preventing Sudden Cardiac Arrest Among Student Athletes:** Assemblyman Cusick introduced legislation to address the tragic problem of sudden cardiac arrest among student athletes. According to studies, as many as 2,000 people under the age of 25 die of sudden cardiac arrest every year. This legislation provides for health care and wellness education & outreach programs, and makes information available for students and their parents and guardians to prevent these avoidable tragedies from taking place. (A.8107/S.5894)

Assemblyman Cusick Chairs the Assembly Committee on Election Law

Cusick oversees all legislation that affects elections on the national, state and local levels, including ballot access, voter registration and enrollment, voter education and outreach, campaign financing and related administrative procedures of the State, as well as local boards of elections. This year legislation passed through the committee relating to increased disclosure of independent expenditure committees (A.7397-A) as well as the closure of a loophole which allowed LLC's to make exorbitant contributions to political candidates. (A.6975-B)



Discount Program for Veterans

Assemblyman Cusick partnered with the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce to initiate a discount program for veterans of the United States military who live in Staten Island. To join this program and receive reductions on goods and services at participating businesses, sign up at Assemblyman Cusick's office at 1911 Richmond Avenue. Please bring your discharge papers (DD-214) to receive your Staten Island VETS card. You will be given a listing of participating businesses that offer discounts at their establishments. For more information, contact our district office at (718) 370-1384.



Assemblyman Cusick thanks Staten Island's veterans at a Memorial Day service at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at the Armory.



Assemblyman Cusick with Army Major Adam Scher at the Travis Fourth of July Parade.



Assemblyman

**Michael
Cusick**

**UPDATE
FROM ALBANY**

SUMMER 2015

UNCLAIMED MONEY

The New York State Office of the Comptroller may have money that belongs to you! There is over \$14 billion dollars of unclaimed money from bank accounts, stocks, and bonds, utility deposits, income tax refunds, and inheritances to name a few. To see if New York State has money that belongs to you go to the Comptroller's website (www.osc.state.ny.us) and click on "Unclaimed Funds."