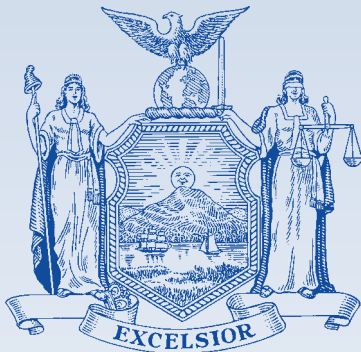




Assemblymember
Dan
QUART
 Reports to the
 People

Summer 2012

Legislative Report



Legislative Priorities

“This legislative session, I introduced more than twenty-five bills. Next session, I’ll continue to fight for cleaner air, fairer taxes and a state government that works for New Yorkers.”



Assemblymember Quart considering legislation in the Assembly chamber.

Inside this issue . . .

<i>Boiler Conversion</i>	<i>pg.2</i>
<i>Autism Council</i>	<i>pg.2</i>
<i>Fairness for Workfare Participants</i>	<i>pg.3</i>
<i>Property Tax Abatement</i>	<i>pg.3</i>
<i>Supporting Public Schools</i>	<i>pg.4</i>
<i>Streamlining Insurance Legislation</i>	<i>pg.4</i>

Boiler Conversion

According to the New York City Department of Health, the Upper East Side and East Midtown have some of the worst air quality in the entire city. The poor air quality is primarily a result of residential buildings burning number 6 fuel. I have introduced legislation that offers a tax credit to landlords who have been unable to afford the high start-up costs of converting their boilers to ones that burn cleaner fuel. Passage of this legislation will go a long way toward funding Mayor Bloomberg's mandate that landlords convert their boilers by 2015 and 2030.



“I have introduced legislation that offers a tax credit to landlords who have been unable to afford the high start-up costs of converting their boilers...”

Autism Council

Every year, more and more New Yorkers are diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The U.S. Department of Education estimates that diagnoses of the disorder grow at a rate of 10-17% each year. Treatment for these disorders requires an enormous amount of coordination for families. People diagnosed with an ASD require services from a variety of occupational and behavioral therapists, all of which must be provided in concert with instructions from medical professionals.

Helping families navigate and coordinate these services will ensure better treatment for people diagnosed with an ASD. This same coordination also needs to happen at the agency level. I am sponsoring legislation that would create the New York State Autism Council, which will include representatives from the Department of Health, Department of Education, the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities and the Office of Children and Family Services, as well as parents of children with autism spectrum disorders. The creation of this Council begins the badly needed process of coordinating state agencies to ensure streamlined services for families who are already overburdened.



Assemblymember Quart debates a bill on the Assembly floor.

“Helping families navigate and coordinate these services will ensure better treatment for people diagnosed with an ASD.”

Fairness for Workfare Participants

Currently, public assistance recipients who receive one of a number of specified payments are required to repay their public assistance grant. However, these recipients are not given financial credit for work performed through participation in a workfare program. Effectively, these recipients are repaying more than the original value of the grant, first with their unpaid workfare labor and then again when they repay the cash value of their grant. Equity requires that workfare participants who repay their public assistance grant be credited for the work they have performed but have not received payment for. The legislation I have introduced effectively codifies the Social Services code recognition that workfare be credited as work. The legislation would also codify state and federal court decisions by requiring that the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, which administers the repayment process, make payment in a timely fashion.



“The legislation I have introduced effectively codifies the Social Services code recognition that workfare be credited as work.”

Property Tax Abatement

My top legislative priority is bringing greater equity to the New York City property tax system. New York City’s property tax system has unfairly penalized owners of condominiums and coops for decades. In 1996, in tacit recognition of the inequity of the system, a tax abatement was implemented for class 2 cooperative and condominium owners. This abatement has been regularly renewed since 1996. However, this year, for the first time since its introduction, the abatement was not renewed by the legislature.

I was and remain a co-sponsor of the Assembly legislation that extended the tax abatement. This legislation would have extended the abatement for Class 2 owners without reference to any other matters related to Class 2 ownership. The state legislature should have passed

this bill. Instead, because of continuing negotiations with the City concerning the J-51 tax credit, the Loft Law and changing the eligibility requirements for the abatement, the State Legislature did not pass the tax abatement before the end of the legislative session.

The City and the State Assembly were ultimately able to negotiate an agreement on a comprehensive property tax bill, but unfortunately the three day legislative “aging” process required to vote on legislation would have

required the vote be scheduled after the end of session. We were able to secure from Mayor Bloomberg his assurance that the City would extend the abatement and provide owners with their rebates pending the eventual legislative action.

However, New York City cooperative and condominium owners should not have to depend on a promise to reassure them that they will not be subject to an enormous and inequitable tax increase. This matter is of such critical

significance that only legislative action will suffice. I have called for a special legislative session to pass this tax abatement bill as soon as possible.

From a broader perspective, though, simply

extending this tax abatement is not sufficient. New York City’s property tax system should be thoroughly overhauled to ensure greater equity for property owners. This session I introduced legislation that would reclassify owners of utilities properties to increase equity and lower costs for all rate payers, especially cooperative and condominium owners. Equity in property taxes remains a legislative priority for me until we have a permanent solution to this recurrent problem.

“New York City’s property tax system has unfairly penalized owners of condominiums and co-ops for decades.”

Supporting Public Schools

Providing the highest-quality public education to every student on the Upper East Side and East Midtown has been one of my highest priorities since taking office. I have worked directly with public school principals and Parent Teacher Associations to ensure that they have additional access to computer training, technology training and local arts institutions. We have been able to bring these additional resources to Wagner Middle School and PS 198 Elementary School.

I am also committed to ensuring that all public schools in the district can accept all of the students in their zone. Parents in our district have overwhelmingly expressed their satisfaction with the existing public school choices and their desire for greater access to these schools. The challenge remains to increase the number of elementary and middle school seats on the Upper East Side and East Midtown. I was pleased to work closely with the Department of Education (DOE) and soon-to-be Principal Dan McCormick to ensure that PS 527, a new elementary school opening in the neighborhood for the 2012-13 school year, will be a highly functioning zoned elementary school from its inception.

On February 29, the Success Academy charter school network submitted a pro-

posal to open three new charter schools in Manhattan. As required by State Education Law, a public hearing was held and the committee accepted public comments. On June 25, the SUNY Board of Trustees Charter School Committee ap-

proved the proposal, authorizing the Success Academy network to open one new school in Manhattan's District 4 and two in District 2.

However, parents on the Upper East Side and East Midtown have made clear their opposition to any charter schools in the area, and have been clear in their opposition to the co-location of charter schools within DOE public schools. Overcrowding is a persistent problem in District 2 public schools, demonstrated by kindergarten waitlists for our high-quality public schools. Simply put, any available space in our local public schools should be used to build much-needed middle school classrooms, not provided to charter school operators.

Later this summer, the SUNY Board of Trustees Charter School Committee will hold another public hearing to determine whether these schools will be co-located within public school buildings. My office will be closely monitoring this situation and I will submit testimony strongly opposing co-location to the committee.



Assemblymember Quart with his son, Sam, and New York City Schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott, celebrating the opening of PS 527 on the Upper East Side.

Streamlining Insurance Legislation

As a member of the Assembly Insurance Committee, I have actively worked to simplify and streamline our insurance laws. During this past legislative session I co-sponsored the following legislation updating our laws, removing obsolete statutes and improving state insurance policy for all New Yorkers:

- *Requiring life insurers to make a good-faith effort to identify deceased policy holders and pay out any benefits due*
- *Eliminating a gap in auto insurance coverage for volunteer fire fighters and ambulance workers*
- *Permitting financially-challenged colleges and universities to reduce costs by self-insuring student health insurance*
- *Regulating derivatives trading to ensure that parties using these investment products are responsibly collateralized*
- *Simplifying the process of purchasing and choosing coverage levels for supplementary auto insurance to provide coverage to uninsured and underinsured motorists*
- *Insuring that valid claims for medically necessary treatment are not denied because of technical errors during the submission process*

This important legislation was passed by both the State Assembly and State Senate and is expected to be signed into law by Governor Cuomo.



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