



# COMMUNITY NEWS

Summer 2017

*from Assemblyman*

# J. GARY PRETLOW

89<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

As your representative in the New York State Assembly, I am pleased to announce that with the recent passing of the state budget, we have delivered a \$153.1 billion spending plan that is a detailed blueprint to move our state forward. From making

sure the wealthy pay their fair share, to strengthening our kids' education, to finally "Raising the Age," this budget continues our progress and proves we're committed to innovation, opportunity and supporting those that need a helping hand.

## BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

### INVESTING IN OUR SCHOOLS AND OUR CHILDREN

The 2017-2018 budget increases education aid by \$1 billion for a total of \$25.7 billion, a 4.1 percent increase from last year's budget, reaffirming the Assembly Majority's unrelenting commitment to putting every student on their path to success.

The future success of our children is dependent on how we prepare them for it today. Therefore, in order for our schools to have adequate funding to meet the

needs of every student, I am pleased to inform you that the **City of Mount Vernon Public Schools will receive a total of \$100,817,033 in state aid, an increase of 6.23 percent from last year.**

There's truly no better investment than one in our kids. By giving our schools the funding and resources they need, we can protect vital education programs and help our kids learn, grow and get ahead.

### Spotlight on Reading

When school lets out for the summer, we encourage our kids to continue learning by picking up a book. Reading can be fun-books can immerse children in far-off worlds, new characters and thrilling narrative. This year, I'm sponsoring a Summer Reading Challenge in coordination with the New York State Library to inspire kids to read on a

regular basis throughout summer break.

Here's how the challenge works: Mark a calendar for each day in August that your child reads with you, someone else or alone. Once you have marked off 25 days or more, please contact my office and I will award your child with a New York State Excellence in Reading Certificate. Thank you and happy reading!

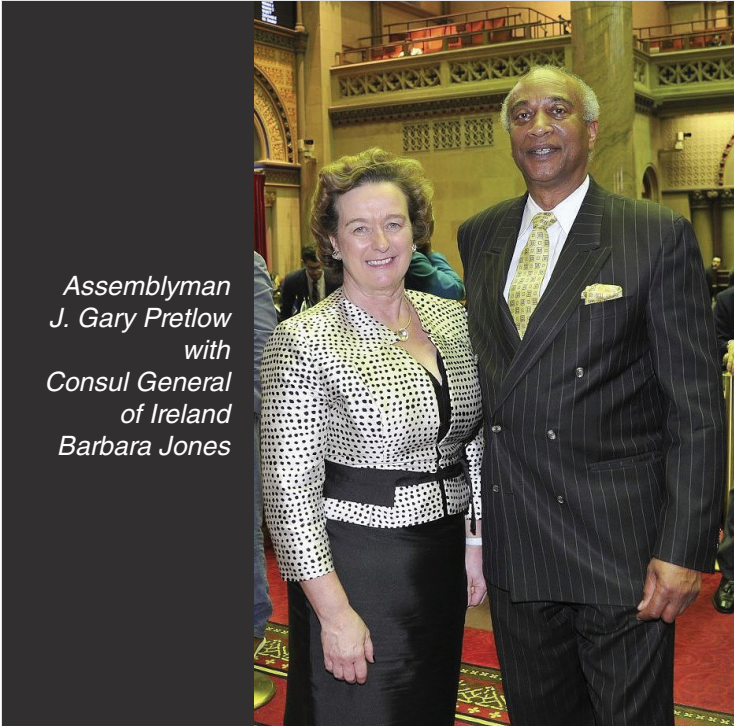


Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)





*The College of Westchester advocating for TAP*



*Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow with Consul General of Ireland Barbara Jones*



*Pretlow's visit to Riverside High School with the Arts Council of Westchester*

## HIGHER EDUCATION

Working families in New York State and across the nation are seeing the costs of a college education soar as the need for a college degree to access good-paying jobs has never been greater.

To assist students in achieving their dream of attaining a higher degree of learning, this year's state budget allows eligible students to attend public colleges and universities tuition free by providing

funding to establish the **Excelsior Scholarship**, a groundbreaking, first-of-its-kind initiative to make SUNY and CUNY schools tuition-free for New Yorkers who earn less than \$125,000 annually. Students who attend a private college in New York and earn less than \$125,000 annually would be eligible for a scholarship award of \$6,000.

## HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

I am pleased to announce that I helped pass the **New York Health Act**, legislation that would create a universal single-payer plan to provide health coverage to every New York resident.

The threatened repeal of the Affordable Care Act in Washington shows a complete lack of basic human decency. It would not only put millions of New Yorkers' health in jeopardy, but the federal administration has the audacity to link it to an enormous tax cut for the wealthy. We all know that you can't put a price tag on someone's life but that's what they are doing. That's why the Assembly Majority is once again taking a stand to ensure health care is a basic human right that is available to everyone.

**The New York Health Act** would establish a universal health care system within the state, known as New York Health, and expand coverage eligibility to include

all residents, regardless of wealth, income, age or pre-existing condition. In addition, every enrollee would have access to the full range of doctors and service providers offered. The plan would provide comprehensive inpatient and outpatient care, primary and preventative care, maternity care, prescription drug costs, laboratory testing, rehabilitative care and dental, vision and hearing care.

Health care should not be a luxury, plain and simple. For anyone to argue otherwise is contrary to what this state stands for. Here in New York, we look out for one another, and it's about time our health care system truly reflects that. We need a system that provides the seniors who depend on prescription medication or the parents whose baby was born with a pre-existing condition with the health care they need no matter what the circumstances may be.



# COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS



*Neighborhood Preservation Coalition of NYS*



*New York United Teachers*



*Mt. Vernon High School Boys Basketball Team "2017 NYS Champions" saluted at the State Capitol*

## SUPPORTING SENIORS' HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

When a spouse has to face the already devastating experience of moving a loved one out of their home and into a long-term care facility, they should not have to give up their financial security. Therefore, the 2017-18 state budget provides \$13.5 million to support long-term care, including restoring \$10 million to preserve spousal refusal, ensuring couples do not lose their life saving in the event a spouse becomes ill and needs nursing home care.

The budget also protects seniors' hard-earned and well deserved property tax relief, rejecting the executive proposal to change the Enhanced STAR program by requiring all seniors eligible for the Enhanced STAR program to register with the state and participate in the Income Verification Program. Currently, seniors are able to register with their local assessor or register when they file their income tax returns – a process that is far easier and causes few headaches.

## PROTECTING MEDICAID AND AFFORDABLE CARE

The final budget restores funding for Medicaid and other public health programs. The Legislature restored \$78.8 million in proposed reductions to Medicaid and restores \$37.6 million to public health programs. Further, the budget restores \$10 million in cuts to emergency rooms across New York State. It also provides \$10 million to support safety-net hospitals, which care for low-income and uninsured patients, \$10 million for critical access hospitals and 20 million for mental health facilities.

It is vital that New Yorkers have access to the health care they need. I believe an investment in public health makes New York stronger, that's why I fought for these programs so that Mount Vernon families are able to get the care they need without breaking the bank.

## RAISING THE AGE

The budget includes a measure to ensure young people who encounter New York's criminal justice system are treated fairly and given a better chance to turn their lives around. Raise the Age, which raises the age of criminal responsibility in New York from 16 to 18 years old, is an issue the Assembly Majority has championed for more than 12 years.

Raising the Age for teenagers is not about letting them off the hook for the crimes they commit, but acknowledging that many teens make mistakes, not because they are bad people, but because they are kids and they often don't know better and can't fully appreciate the consequences of their actions. If we truly want to reduce crime and increase safety, we need to give them a greater chance of turning their lives around and learning from their mistakes.



**CLIP AND RETURN**



*Your questions or comments are important to me. If you have any concerns or issues you would like to discuss with me, please indicate and return to:*

**Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow, 89<sup>th</sup> District**  
6 Gramatan Avenue, Suite 201, Mt. Vernon, New York 10550

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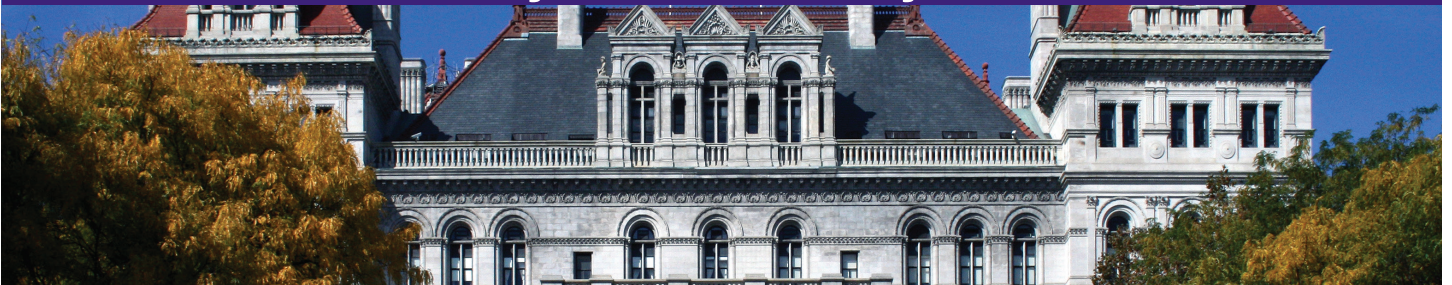
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**J. Gary  
PRETLOW**

**SUMMER 2017**

**Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow**



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