



Legislative Wrap Up

from Assemblywoman
Ellen Jaffee

2011-2012

Dear Neighbors,

The 2011 – 2012 legislative session was a successful one. As many of you may already know, the budget was passed on time. More importantly it was a great year for middle-class New Yorkers. The new tax brackets established in December 2011 provided middle-class families with the lowest tax rate in 58 years, cutting taxes for 99% of New Yorkers. In addition, since April, our families have been enjoying a 4% state sales tax exemption on clothing, footwear and other such items under \$110. This newsletter provides more detailed news about what we accomplished together. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and concerns. Please call me at 845-624-4601 or email me at jaffee@assembly.state.ny.us.

Warmest regards,

Ellen C. Jaffee

NYS Assemblymember, 95th District

2011-2012 BUDGET HELPS NEW YORK FAMILIES BY CUTTING TAXES AND BOOSTING OUR ECONOMY

New York's Middle Class Wins with the
2011-2012 State Budget:

- Closed the state's \$3.5 billion budget deficit, boosting the economy.
- Created jobs by allocating \$1.2 billion for road and bridge repair projects as well as the New York Works Task Force, which coordinates the distribution of funds, helping to focus resources.
- Raised no new taxes or fees except for the wealthiest New Yorkers making over \$1 million dollars a year.
- Eliminated the burdensome MTA payroll tax for many small businesses, self-employed citizens, and schools. "By eliminating the MTA payroll tax for businesses with payrolls lower than \$250,000, we are supporting our small businesses and keeping jobs here in Rockland," says Jaffee.
- Increased school funding by 4% providing roughly \$2 million for area school districts, as well as aid for community colleges, which makes education more accessible and more affordable for everyone. "When we get more state funding for our schools, it gives taxpayers real property tax breaks," says Jaffee.
- Funded park restoration projects throughout the state, including \$5 million for Rockland Lake State Park.

Jaffee Fights for Minimum Wage to Raise the Standard of Living for Rockland's Hardworking Families and to Help Our Local Economy Grow

Jaffee said, "Raising the minimum wage to keep it consistent with the rate of inflation is a matter of economic fairness. The Assembly plan rewards the hardworking men and women who are struggling to make ends meet by providing them with a critical economic boost. 78% of New York residents support this."

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ELLEN JAFFEE

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JAFFEE BILLS ARE SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR, IMPROVING HEALTH, SAFETY, AND JOB OPTIONS FOR NEW YORKERS

Ellen Jaffee Gets Important Laws Passed for New Yorkers in the 2011-2012 Session

Lifesaving law to improve early breast cancer detection: A.9586-D/S.6769-B

The law requires health providers to inform women who have had a mammogram if they have dense breast tissue. Dense breast tissue is known to be one of the leading risk factors for breast cancer, but in the past, despite a dense tissue finding, a mammogram report often read “normal” or “negative” meaning no problems. Jaffee thanks Governor Cuomo, Senator Flanagan, JoAnn Pushkin, and all the courageous advocates who worked so tirelessly to ensure this lifesaving legislation was passed.

To learn more about Dense Breast Tissue and JoAnn Pushkin, Executive Director, Are You Dense Advocacy, Inc. visit: <https://areyoudenseadvocacy.org>

Law Protects Victims of Assault by Giving Prompt Access to Treatment that Prevents HIV/AIDS

This new law was authored by Ellen Jaffee to give survivors of assault direct access to life-saving HIV/AIDS prevention treatment without going through red tape. Jaffee credits the Rockland Family Shelter for supporting her efforts early on. Carolyn Fish, Executive Director said, “The Rockland Family Shelter is delighted to support the HIV/PEP treatment bill because it will increase the dosage in the starter pack of HIV post-exposure prophylaxis treatment to assault survivors who are found to be at risk for HIV/AIDS. This is a step forward for increasing preventative treatment.”

Workforce Training Bill increases Job Opportunities for Women; Boosts Women’s Earning Power

Ellen Jaffee introduced legislation to improve services and training for women to qualify for higher paying jobs, including those jobs that traditionally go to men. It requires that women must be informed about all available jobs, not only those traditionally thought of as “women’s work,” because Jaffee believes that in the 21st century, women should have access to higher paying jobs in areas such as technology and construction.



Ellen Jaffee, Earl Miller, Nyack College Executive Director of Community Relations and student advocates.

More than one million households in New York State are headed by women who are responsible for the economic security of their families; yet, on average, a woman working full-time in New York earns \$40,584 annually, while a man working full-time earns \$49,174.

Law improves Access to Treatment for Women with Alcohol and Drug Addiction A.1078/S.3279

Ellen Jaffee’s law will improve the chances for women who are suffering from addiction to alcohol and drug abuse to get the proper care. Often women go undetected and become dangerous to their families, themselves and the public. Ms. Jaffee received assistance from Rockland County experts Dr. Mary Jane Alexander, a senior research scientist at the Nathan Kline Institute, Maureen Hyatt, LCSW, Director of Recovery services at the Mental Health Association of Rockland and Emily Feiner, LCSW, who treats a range of disorders, including substance abuse.

“Substance abuse among women is on the rise,” Jaffee stated. “Unfortunately, some treatment programs do not recognize gender differences, which can deter women from seeking help. I am hopeful this law will correct that.”

Jaffee’s Workforce Training Law: First in New York State to close the gender wage gap



WORKFORCE TRAINING PRESS CONFERENCE, AUGUST 2012: *Melanie FitzGerald (YWCA of the Northeast Regional Manager), Julia Nesbitt (Director of Human Resources at the YWCA White Plains & Central Westchester), Christine Sadowski (Executive Director of YWCA of Orange County and Public Policy Committee Chair of the NYS YWCA), Kelli Owens (Government Relations and Public Policy Director YWCAs of the Northeast), Aimee Vargas (Mid-Hudson Regional Director for Empire State Development Corporation), Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee, Beverly Neufeld (President, New York Women’s Agenda and Director of Equal Pay Coalition NYC), Willow Maese (RCC student/cybersecurity major), Jennifer DeLeon (Executive Director, Tomorrow’s Workplace)*

Photo credit: Kim Tran, Editor, nanuet.patch.com

No Smoking at Train Stations (A.5516-C)

Jaffee’s bill makes it illegal to light up at outdoor ticketing, boarding, and platform areas of trains operated by the MTA or its subsidiaries. This ban will be enforced by the MTA, with violators subject to a \$100 fine. “Commuters deserve protection from the proven hazards of secondhand smoke,” says Jaffee. “This ban is a tremendous victory for the health of New York’s rail travelers.”

The New York State Department of Health estimates that secondhand smoke is responsible for the deaths of 2,500 New Yorkers each year. The U.S. Surgeon General has declared there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

Mercury Restrictions Protect People and the Planet (A.668)

Assemblywoman Jaffee’s legislation restricts the sale of mercury-added consumer products by closing a long-standing loophole that prevented state regulators from taking the toxins off the shelf. The state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) now has greater authority and clearer guidelines to enforce its mission of banning mercury-added consumer products. “A loophole should never mean mercury gets into the hands of children, and with this legislation we are making sure it doesn’t,” Jaffee stated.

When common household products containing mercury are discarded, they often contaminate soil, drinking water sources, and aquatic habitats.

As a public health threat, mercury has been proven to impair brain development. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has estimates that between 300,000 and 630,000 infants each year are born in the United States with mercury levels high enough to be associated with IQ loss.

Recycled Computers Make Technology Work for Taxpayers, Seniors and the Disadvantaged (A.8124)

Thanks to Jaffee’s efforts, governments statewide are now authorized to donate their used computers to not-for-profit organizations such as the United Way and Big Brothers Big Sisters, which serve senior citizens and low-income individuals. “The thought of perfectly good computers going to waste when the public has use for them makes no sense,” says Jaffee.



Ellen Jaffee with New York State AFL-CIO president and Rockland resident, Mario F. Cilento.

Jaffee Advocates for Rockland County Businesses

- Appointed to Assembly Committee on Economic Development, Job Creation, Industry and Commerce. “Creating jobs and encouraging economic growth are urgent priorities, and I will use this post to further the needs of Rockland’s businesses and workers,” said Jaffee.
- Hosted a Small Business Resource Forum at RCC with an in-depth presentation by Empire State Development Deputy Director, Steve Cohen.
- Hosted Women’s Business Forum co-sponsored by the Rockland Economic Development Corporation.
- Partnered with Rockland Economic Development Corporation to poll small businesses in Rockland for ideas on how to streamline or eliminate burdensome state rules, regulations and fees.



Ellen Jaffee and Speaker Sheldon Silver honor the Suffern Mounties hockey team, 2012 New York Division 1 State Champions.



Rockland Family Shelter Executive Director, Carolyn Fish, (center) and staff gather with Jaffee for the Annual NYS Coalition Against Domestic Violence Lobby Day.



Jaffee and Catskill Ramapo Library advocates on Library Advocacy Lobby Day.

NEW YORK LEGISLATURE PASSES LAWS THAT PROTECT OUR FAMILIES

- **I-STOP (A.10623) Cracks Down on Prescription Drug Abuse**

“Prescription drug abuse is a serious problem, which can lead to overdose and death, especially among teenagers,” Jaffee said. I- STOP (Internet System for Tracking Over-Prescribing), which she helped pass, will crack down on illegal trafficking of painkillers, establish a real-time, controlled-substance database that will keep these dangerous drugs out of the hands of users, and require doctors to review a patient’s controlled-substance prescription history before prescribing certain medications.

- **Cyberbullying (A.10712)**

Cyberbullying legislation, which Jaffee helped pass, protects students from online bullying, harassment and discrimination by requiring school districts to respond by designating a school official to receive and promptly investigate bullying reports, take action to prevent recurrences, coordinate with law enforcement when appropriate, develop a bullying prevention strategy and to notify all school community members of the school's policies. The new legislation also sets training requirements for school employees.

- **Closes Loophole in Child Pornography Laws (A.10713)**

This legislation prohibits individuals from knowingly accessing, with the intent of viewing, child pornography on the Internet. Currently, any individual who views child pornography on a website where the images become automatically embedded in a computer does not "possess" child pornography. This legislation closes that loophole. Now if an individual purposefully accesses a website, intending to view child pornography, he or she will be committing a class E felony.



Jaffee and Maureen Morgan, Rockland County Veteran of the Year with NYS women veterans.



Jaffee gathers with former Rockland County Legislator, Connie Coker, and other members of the NYS Association of Licensed Midwives.



Gathering at Maria Luisa in Nyack to promote federal tax incentives for women’s businesses are: (left to right) Frances Pratt, Nyack NAACP President; Assemblywoman Jaffee; Senator Kirsten Gillibrand; Katherine Auguste, NAACP Youth Council President and intern for Ms. Jaffee.

PROTECT YOUR HOME AND FAMILY FROM FLOOD DAMAGE

I hope our area is spared damage from flooding this year, but I’m passing along some tips I’ve found helpful, just in case. As we move into late summer and fall, the chance of tropical storms traveling up the coast to our area increases. Of course, heavy rain knows no season. In fact, flooding is the most common natural disaster in the United States. It can impact any household even those designated low-risk. By being prepared and understanding your flood risks, you can protect your family, your home, and your property. Since most homeowner’s and renter’s insurance policies do not cover flood damage, be sure to talk with your insurance provider about your existing policy and ask if additional coverage is right for you.

- Tips to prepare for a flood and to help prevent flood damage, including the following, can be found at: www.floodsmart.gov.
- Determine your flood risk by visiting <https://msc.fema.gov> then entering your zip code and address.
- If you live in an area of the county designated high-risk, elevate your furnace, water heater and electric panel.
- Consider installing “check valves” to prevent flood water from backing up into your drains.
- If feasible, construct barriers to stop floodwater from entering your home and seal walls in basements with waterproofing compounds.
- Consider purchasing a generator, especially if you rely on a sump pump. Sump pumps may also be powered with an emergency battery, which is a cost effective alternative worth discussing with your plumber or electrician.
- Talk with your insurance agent about your current policy coverage and needs.
- Contact the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) for information on federally-backed flood insurance. Flood insurance, recommended by both New York State and the federal government, is more affordable than you may think.
- Build an emergency kit and make a family communication plan.