



Legislative Update

from Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee

2013-2014

Dear Neighbors,

Please accept my thanks for allowing me to represent you, once again, in Albany. I am pleased to report that during the 2013 session we passed a budget and legislation that cut taxes for working families and small businesses, created jobs, and boosted our local economy. We successfully restored funding to protect disabled persons, raised the minimum wage and fought hard to guarantee equal pay and equal rights for women, a fight that I pledge to continue.

This newsletter provides more detailed information about what we accomplished during the 2013 legislative session. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and concerns. Phone me at 845-624-4601 or email me at jaffee@assembly.state.ny.us.

Warmest regards,

Ellen C. Jaffee

NYS Assemblymember, 97th District

Assemblywoman Jaffee sponsors hikes in minimum wage and unemployment benefits

The 2013-14 state budget increases the state's minimum wage to \$9.00 per hour by 2016. Assemblywoman Jaffee, who sponsored the bill, said, "The thousands of working families who depend on a minimum wage will have a little more money in their pockets to spend locally, jump-starting consumer spending and helping the economy. I agree with more than 80 percent of all New Yorkers who support increasing the minimum wage."

900,000
New Yorkers will benefit.

Additionally, a graduated increase in unemployment benefits will provide some assistance to those who are out of work or underemployed. The current maximum unemployment weekly benefit of \$405 will increase to \$420 in 2014. A schedule establishes regular increases until the benefit reaches \$450 in 2018. The maximum benefit will be adjusted until 2026 when it will reach 50% of the average weekly wage.

Assemblywoman Jaffee helped restore \$90 million in funds to people with disabilities

Thanks to the efforts of Assemblywoman Jaffee and her Assembly colleagues, up to \$90 million will be restored to the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) in order to fund the non-profits that provide life-changing services for those with developmental disabilities.

Jill Warner, CEO of Jawonio, said, "For the thousands of New Yorkers with disabilities and their families, we thank Ellen Jaffee for her efforts. She kept the pressure on to ensure the passage of this legislation."



Back row: Angela Neal, Jawonio Advocacy Group member, Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee, Claude Neva, staff, Joe Borno, JAG member, David Musson, Coordinator, JAG. Seated front row: Scott Salmon, Advocacy Coach and Ramon Rivera, JAG group member.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ELLEN JAFFEE

ROCKLAND OFFICE: One Blue Hill Plaza, Box 1549 • Pearl River, NY 10965 • 845-624-4601 • FAX: 845-624-2911

ALBANY OFFICE: 650 Legislative Office Building • Albany, NY 12248 • 518-455-5118 • FAX: 518-455-5119

Email: jaffee@assembly.state.ny.us

Assemblywoman Jaffee's bills pass both houses and await Governor's signature

Jaffee gets advisory team oversight in lottery "spin-up" bill for East Ramapo schools

To help East Ramapo schools minimize already devastating cuts to programs, the lottery "spin-up" bill (A.7514/S.5057-A), co-sponsored in the Senate by Sen. David Carlucci, will provide \$3.5 million in aid to the East Ramapo Central School District by advancing the revenue from New York State Lottery that the school district receives each year. The district pays back the sum over 30 years, by subtracting from the amount of future lottery payments to the district. It works in increments, and there is no interest.



Assemblywoman Jaffee in Albany with East Ramapo Central School District students and "Save Our School" advocates.

The bill specifies that before any funds can be used, the East Ramapo Central School District superintendent must appoint a temporary district-based advisory team, which will include a public school administrator and teacher as well as a parent of a student attending public school in the district. To ensure proper oversight of the funds, the advisory team will develop a comprehensive spending plan, hold at least one public forum, and certify that the final spending plan adopted by the school board achieves the educational goals the advisory board developed.

"I am hopeful that the funds from this lottery spin-up legislation will help support instructional programs in East Ramapo schools," said Jaffee. "I included a requirement for an oversight team to provide an opportunity for the voice of the community to be heard and to ensure that these funds will improve the education for East Ramapo students. This bill is but one measure. I will continue to advocate for increased funding for East Ramapo and for state oversight."

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2013 LEGISLATIVE SESSION:

Jaffee votes to protect our children, keep our communities safe

Jaffee sponsors Repeat Child Abuse Offenders Act

Recently, New York took steps to protect our children by passing the Repeat Child Abuse Offenders Act, (A.2623-A/S.5869), which Assemblywoman Jaffee sponsored. Instead of the current three-year window to charge an adult for assault on a child, the new bill expands the window to ten years – making it more difficult for adults who hurt children in New York to get away with their crimes.

NY SAFE Act tackles serious public health and safety problems

Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee co-sponsored the New York State SAFE Act, which Governor Cuomo signed into law on January 15th. These gun safety measures, including background checks, an assault weapons ban, and mental health screenings for those who seek to purchase guns are designed to reduce violent crime and protect our children, families and communities.

"This law provides real measures to tackle this serious public health and safety problem," Jaffee said. "It respects the rights of law-abiding citizens and does not stop them from selling or purchasing guns. The law's aim is to save lives and to avoid future tragedies like the massacre of school children and their teachers at Sandy Hook or the murders of first responders in Webster, NY."

Making it illegal for teens to get dangerous over-the-counter drugs

Cough and cold medicine are safe for most people, but growing numbers of teens are overdosing on products that contain dextromethorphan (DXM), a non-narcotic cough suppressant used in more than 100 cough and cold medicines. These include Robitussin, Sudafed, Tylenol, Nyquil, as well as generic products. Taken in large amounts, DXM can cause hallucinations, brain damage, seizures and even death. Excessive use of DXM to get high is commonly called robo-tripping.

Jaffee's bill (A.933-B/S.696-B), co-sponsored in the Senate by Sen. Mark Grisanti, (R- Buffalo) prohibits stores from selling any products containing DXM to persons under the age of 18 without a prescription. The bill requires proof of legal age to purchase these products. Any store found in violation will be fined \$250.

Protecting hospital patients, staff, and visitors from dangerous secondhand smoke

The dangers of secondhand smoke are well-documented. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that there is no risk-free level of contact with secondhand smoke; even brief exposure can be harmful to your health. Jaffee's bill (A.1115-A/S.1987-A), co-sponsored in the Senate by Sen. Jack Martins (R-Mineola), prohibits smoking on hospital and nursing home grounds throughout New York State and within 15 feet of the buildings' property lines.

Did you know? Secondhand smoke lingers in the air hours after cigarettes have been extinguished, causing or aggravating a wide range of health problems. It can trigger asthma episodes and increases the risk of heart attack. Secondhand smoke exposure is responsible for 2,500 deaths a year in New York State.

Jaffee gets BOCES funds for needed repairs and saves taxpayers money

Putting off necessary repairs due to a lack of funds ends up costing Rockland taxpayers more in the long run. Jaffee's bill (A.6435/S.5137), co-sponsored in the Senate by Sen. John Flanagan (R- Islip), improves school environments for students, teachers, and staff, by providing BOCES with a reserve fund that will allow for timely repairs that were not anticipated and not budgeted for.

"This bill is important to the Rockland BOCES, as well as to all the other 36 BOCES because it will help districts plan for emergency repairs in a timely and cost effective manner," said Mary Jean Marsico, District Superintendent of Schools, Rockland BOCES.

Jaffee's Breast Density Inform Law in effect

In January 2013, Ellen Jaffee's landmark 2012 legislation made New York the first state to require that women be informed in clear language if their breasts are dense. Density can hide cancers on a mammogram and may increase a woman's risk of developing breast cancer. The law seeks to provide a woman with this medical finding and to encourage a follow-up conversation with her doctor about supplemental screening. New York's Breast Density Inform Law, the most comprehensive in the nation, serves as a model for many other states.

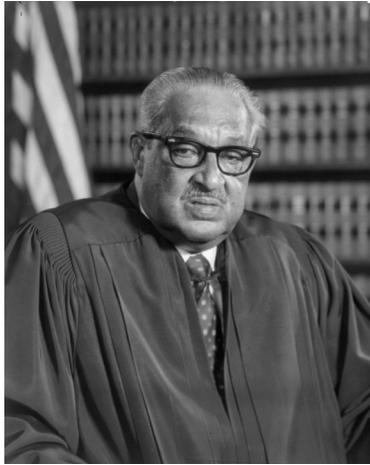


Assemblywoman Jaffee with Anita Dreichler, Rockland Community Against Hunger (RCAH) Coordinator (far right) and Rob Maher, Director of TOUCH-NY Inc. and a founder of RCAH.

Thurgood Marshall Day honors the civil rights pioneer

This spring, Ellen Jaffee sponsored a resolution to commemorate the third annual Thurgood Marshall Day. She wrote the law that designates May 17th as a day to honor the late US Supreme Court Justice. Thurgood Marshall has been hailed as one of our nation's strongest champions of equal rights. He is best known for representing the NAACP before the Supreme Court in the case *Brown vs. the Board of Education*, which ended segregation in our public schools.

It was not his first school desegregation victory: He argued to desegregate a school in the Village of Hillburn. Assemblywoman Jaffee thanks the brothers of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and the Spring Valley NAACP whose tireless advocacy made Thurgood Marshall Day possible. She said, "May 17th should be a time to remember the distinguished, groundbreaking career of the late Justice Marshall."



Thurgood Marshall, the first African American to serve as a Supreme Court Justice.

Assemblywoman Jaffee responds to Comptroller's report on East Ramapo schools

"I will continue to advocate for funding for East Ramapo. This year, I secured more than \$2 million dollars in aid for the district over what the Governor proposed in his budget. No question: East Ramapo needs more funding. In the end, it's the students who suffer the consequences. Due to massive cuts, East Ramapo is not providing the same quality education that students in other Rockland districts are receiving," Jaffee said. "While I am encouraged that the State Education Department is taking a more active role in the district, this audit clearly underscores the need for aggressive state oversight, which I have been urging. I have requested and will continue to request more detailed audits in response to previously raised issues about transportation, special education and textbooks."

DREAM Act passed Assembly

The DREAM Act would make New York one of only four states to offer state financial aid to undocumented students. This legislation (A.2597/S.2378), sponsored by Assemblyman Francisco Moya (D-Corona) and Senator Jose Peralta (D-East Elmhurst), would allow students who have earned a high school diploma or GED to apply for state scholarships and the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) to help them pay for college.



Assemblywoman Jaffee with activists from the NYS Youth Leadership Council and Assemblymembers Marcos Crespo (D-Bronx) and Francisco Moya (D-Corona) at the Speaker's press conference on Assembly passage of the DREAM Act.

"These young people should be afforded an equal opportunity to continue their education in college and to contribute their many talents to help grow New York's economy and to keep New York competitive in the 21st century," Jaffee said.

The DREAM Act helps families by:

1. Setting up the DREAM Fund, which would raise private funds to provide scholarships for eligible college-bound children with at least one immigrant parent.
2. Giving more access to the New York State College Tuition Savings Program, helping families save for their children's future education if they provide a taxpayer identification number.

Unfortunately, this bill did not become law because it did not pass the Senate.

Ellen Jaffee fights for Rockland in 2013 State Budget

This year's third, consecutive on-time budget puts more money in the pockets of New Yorkers.

Middle-class tax relief

- Extends the middle-class personal income tax cut for three more years—at the lowest rate in 60 years.
- Increases the STAR property tax relief program to \$3.4 billion in total funding, the highest level ever.
- Reduces energy taxes and saves customers a total \$500 million statewide by fiscal year 2017.
- Sets up a permanent Financial Restructuring Board to help our towns and villages restructure their finances, cut costs and achieve other savings that will benefit Rockland taxpayers.

Investing in our students

- Increases funding for public schools in the 97th Assembly District by nearly \$6 million, more than a 5 percent increase over last year.
- Includes \$25 million statewide for full-day and half-day pre-kindergarten grants to allow for more full-day and pre-K programs across the state and additional half-day, pre-K slots.
- Boosts aid by \$150 for each student, called "Full Time Equivalent" (FTE) students at SUNY community colleges like RCC.
- Supports our local libraries — over recent years, our libraries have become info centers for a host of services from job searches to filing tax returns.

Economic development and savings for small businesses

- Creates a tax credit for businesses that hire veterans and helps those who served our country find good jobs when they complete their military service.
- Saves businesses \$446.5 million annually by reforming the Workers' Compensation program and Unemployment Insurance system.
- Provides high-tech jobs by assisting the start-up and growth of new businesses and technology companies.

Jaffee sponsors Fair Elections Act to fight corruption

A sweeping election reform bill (A.4980-C) takes a big step toward campaign finance restrictions in New York State. Advocacy organizations like Common Cause support the bill, which prevents larger donors from having too much influence on who gets elected. Those in violation of the proposed law must pay up to \$20,000 in fines.

"Elections based on public financing, lower contribution limits, and stronger disclosure rules will dramatically reduce the role of lobbyists and wealthy special interests while rebuilding the public trust in government," Jaffee said, adding, "We have a long way to go."

The bill passed the Assembly but is still in committee in the Senate.

JAFFEE FIGHTS FOR FAIRNESS: Women's 10-Point Equality Act (WEA) passes Assembly

The Assembly passed all 10 points of Governor Cuomo's Women's Equality Act to ensure equal rights for New York women. The bill (A.8070) contains 10 points to bring fairness to the women of New York, which include strengthening a woman's right to health care, combating sexual harassment, increasing protections for victims of domestic violence and imposing stronger penalties for human trafficking.

A major piece of the Women's Equality Act is equal pay for women. "When more than one million households in New York State are headed by women often struggling to make ends meet, income equality is a matter of survival," Jaffee said.

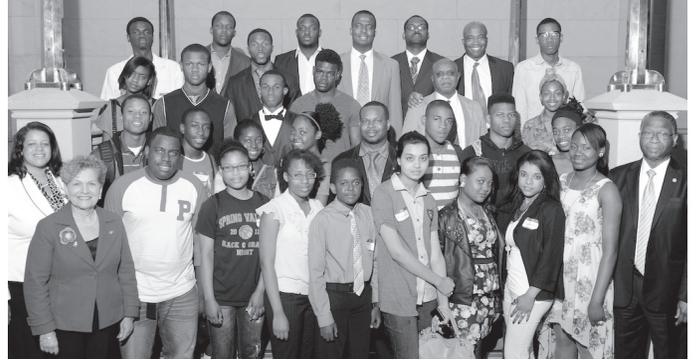
According to several major polls, two out of three New Yorkers favor passage of the entire 10-point act. "Even though the Senate did not vote on the full Women's Equality Act I am committed to getting this passed in the coming months."



Assemblywoman Jaffee and interns Lizzi Ginsberg (far left) and Allison Alcena, join Congresswoman Nita Lowey at her announcement of Superstorm Sandy relief funding.

Jaffee resolution proclaims May 23 Haitian Unity Day in New York State

Haitian Unity Day in Albany has become a tradition, due to Ellen Jaffee's annual introduction of a resolution that recognizes Haiti's legacy of liberty and justice throughout the world. The occasion raises awareness among New Yorkers about the many significant contributions of Haitian Americans as it honors Haiti as the first nation to be borne from a slave uprising.



Assemblywoman Jaffee was joined by her Assembly colleague, Michaele Solages (D-Elmont), the first person of Haitian descent elected to the New York State Assembly, Wilmer Kebreau, Consul of Haiti in New York, Spring Valley's Reverend Nathaniel Demosthene, students from Ramapo and Spring Valley High Schools, and members of the First Timothy Christian Church in Spring Valley.

Get Your Copy of the Commemorative Resolution

If you would like a copy of the resolution to commemorate this special occasion, go to the New York State Assembly website at: <https://www.assembly.state.ny.us>. Enter K478 in the bill search window. Click go, then click printer-friendly text. If you don't have access to a computer, please contact my office.



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Business assistance program for Minority/Women Business Enterprises

Don't miss out... Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee has organized valuable and informative workshops for those who have been actively in business for at least one year. Find out how to grow your business by selling to the government.

SESSION I: September 19th, 2013 • 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Suffern Library ~ 210 Lafayette Ave., Suffern

HOW AND WHY TO GET NYS MWBE

(Minority/Women Business Entity)
CERTIFIED attendees will find out:

- What is MWBE Certification
- The Benefits
- The Process
- How to Maximize the Certification
- Resources
- Prerequisite to this session is that businesses must be actively in business for at least one year.

SESSION II: November 21st, 2013 • 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Finkelstein Library ~ 24 Chestnut St., Spring Valley

GOING OVER THE NYS MWBE APPLICATION QUESTION-BY-QUESTION

This is an opportunity to complete the on-line application. Bring your own laptop or work on one of the library's computers.

- Get questions answered
- Get help with any application obstacles
- Get it done
- Space is limited. Pre-registration is a must!