



NEWS FROM

Assemblymember

John T. McDonald III

FALL 2014

Dear Neighbor:

I am writing to provide you with an update on the accomplishments of the recently ended legislative session and the work coming up in the next session. Much has been accomplished and this newsletter highlights only a fraction of the items addressed this past year. Other areas addressed included the environment, job attraction, reduction of gun violence, and reform of the Common Core. Among the many other priorities is a continued emphasis on ethics in state government. I am a cosponsor of a bill to remove the pension of any elected official who is found guilty of a felony-level offense to public corruption. This remains a priority, as well as health care, education, local government, and business growth.

As always, I encourage you to contact me with any thoughts, comments, concerns, or issues that you may have. I am always willing to meet with constituents in my district office, or out in the district community. I can also be reached by email at mcdonaldj@assembly.state.ny.us, or by phone at (518) 455-4474. Your comments and feedback have and continue to be helpful as we shape our legislative agenda and meet the needs of those we are privileged to serve.

Sincerely,

John T. McDonald III

Assemblymember McDonald serves on the following committees:



Assemblymember McDonald debating on the floor of the Assembly Chamber during legislative session.

CUTTING TAXES

The 2014 Budget, which again passed on time for the fourth consecutive year, laid the groundwork for tax relief across all levels of constituencies. Property taxes are by far the largest burden on New York State residents. It is an issue that I have supported to during my 15 years in elected office, and I remain committed to reducing taxes going forward. Two areas that were impacted by this past legislative session include Business Tax Relief and Property Tax Relief for families.

BUSINESS TAX RELIEF

The intent of this program is to retain and create jobs in upstate New York, an issue that has impacted our upstate economy for decades. Highlights include:

- Reduction of Corporate Tax Rate from 7.1 to 6.5 percent, the lowest level since 1968.
- Elimination of income tax rate for manufacturers, the lowest rate since 1917.
- Established a 20 percent real property tax credit for manufacturers who own or lease property.

PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR OUR FAMILIES

It all starts at home and if we can reduce the burden on local property tax owners, we can reduce the exodus of residents out of state, provide more income for our middle class families, and at the same time, support our local economies. During the past legislative session, the state legislature implemented a \$1.5 billion, three-year program to provide direct property relief to homeowners.

The intent is to assist local governments in finding even more cost-effective ways of delivering services without losing their local identity. Local governments, including cities, towns, villages, counties, or school districts, that qualify by remaining under the tax cap will see refund checks sent to their taxpayers for any increase in the tax levy for that year.

SUPPORTING OUR VETERANS

It is critical that we assist our Veterans who have served our country, and I was pleased to see parts of a bill (A.8230) that I sponsored become law. The bill, which was passed by the legislature and signed by the governor, establishes a six percent goal for participation in State contracts by disabled,

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veteran-owned companies making New York a leader in these efforts nationwide. My goal remains to include all veteran-owned businesses as part of the minority-owned & women-owned business (MWBES) category, giving greater access to all veteran-owned businesses across upstate New York.

SUPPORTING EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE

For the second year in a row, we have increased investment in education, adding more than \$1 billion to public education. This investment addresses the drastic cuts made during 2009 and is intended to help restore critical programs for our youth to provide a well-rounded education. Now more than ever, education is and will be a critical tool for college and career readiness for our youth.

Universal Pre-K saw an increase of investment in the amount of \$340 million to bring full day Pre-K to districts that have not had the program in the past. The ability to provide our children with early education is critical to their overall education and provides an investment that will bring greater performance in the classroom in years to follow.

This November voters will have the ability to vote on expanded technology in the classroom as the "Smart Schools" \$2 billion technology bond act. This effort is to invest in education technology in every school district. Eligible projects include infrastructure improvements that bring high-speed Internet to schools, as well as the purchase of new technologies for student use that will strengthen classroom instruction. Additionally, Smart Schools enables long-term projects that improve full-day Pre-K by constructing new classroom space and investing in high-tech school safety measures.



Assemblymember McDonald, Senator Neil D. Breslin and Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk attend a press conference at the Legislative Office Building on March 24, 2014 advocating for more funding for state schools that have been underfunded for generations.



Assemblymember McDonald visits with children at a day care center in the 108th Assembly District.

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HEROIN/OPIATE CRISIS

This is by far the fastest growing crisis across New York State. As a practicing pharmacist, I know firsthand the challenges individuals face with prescription opiate abuse and street heroin abuse. This was a priority of mine and I was pleased to be the lead sponsor of one of the 12 bills included in a package of legislation passed this year that provides treatment for opioid addiction. The bill authorizes the creation of a demonstration program with the goal to divert those who do not need in-hospital treatment to more appropriate services and facilities for detox. This will reduce emergency room costs, provide alternative short-term care, and test the effectiveness of new approaches to treatment options.

The remaining 11 bills, which I co-sponsored and supported, address other longstanding issues including insurance reforms to improve treatment options for individuals suffering from addiction, measures to increase penalties on those who sell or provide opiates or heroin illegally, provisions to provide naloxone, which is an overdose antidote, to those who need it, and a public awareness campaign to further share the message to prevent drug abuse.