



Dear Neighbors,

I'm pleased to share some exciting news from Albany: the Fiscal Year 2025-26 state budget has been enacted, securing critical support that will directly benefit our community. This budget reflects our district's values and priorities: investing in our families, funding our schools, improving public safety, and supporting working families in keeping up with rising costs. I'll continue fighting to make our community's voice heard in Albany, address our needs, and work to secure our region's fair share of the hard-earned tax dollars AD21 residents send to Albany.

First, a few updates from June:

- **The Lt. Joseph Banish Mental Health Act:** I'm proud to announce that my bill, supporting police throughout the state, passed both houses of the Legislature in June. In collaboration with the Nassau PBA, statewide PBAs and law enforcement organizations. I was successful in securing unanimous Senate and Assembly passage of legislation that will establish a confidential, peer-to-peer mental health support network for law enforcement officers, ensuring they have access to help from fellow officers trained in mental health support. I look forward to my bill being signed into law by the governor in the near future.
 - You can read more about it here: <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Judy-Griffin/story/114474>. (<https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Judy-Griffin/story/114474>)
 - You can watch me speak on the bill here on the floor of the Assembly here: <https://nyassembly.gov/dl/user/cis/6-6-25GriffinLtBanishMentalHealthActVE.mp4> (<https://nyassembly.gov/dl/user/cis/6-6-25GriffinLtBanishMentalHealthActVE.mp4>)
- **Proposed Federal Medicaid cuts:**
 - Please read my latest op-ed on how proposed federal Medicaid cuts would hurt Long Island families here: <https://www.liherald.com/stories/judy-griffen-medicaid-cuts-threaten-our-health-and-economic-stability,215762?>

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- **Redevelopment Tax Credit:** A bill I introduced was included in the Governor's budget proposal and was agreed upon as part of the budget process. It passed both houses as a separate measure. It will establish a local option to provide a redevelopment tax credit, incentivizing the repair of vacant and abandoned residential properties in our communities. My bill will be finalized by the governor in the near future.

Supporting Education & Local Schools

- **Foundation Aid:** Secured \$26.4 billion for public schools, a \$1.4 billion increase over the 2024-25 school year, ensuring stable, predictable support for our local schools.
- **School Aid to Long Island:** Secured an additional \$270 million in school aid for Long Island, a 5.4% increase for our region.
- **Universal School Meals:** Allocated \$340 million to provide free breakfast and lunch for students statewide, helping families save roughly \$165 per child each month. This program includes all students enrolled in schools participating in the national breakfast and lunch program. Before this allocation, many schools on Long Island were excluded from the free school meal program due to eligibility restrictions that unfairly impacted our region, due to our higher cost of living.
- **Student Mental Health:** Implemented a bell-to-bell ban on internet-enabled cell phones to improve classroom and social engagement, a change that parents, teachers, students, and administrators overwhelmingly supported throughout Assembly District 21.
- **Libraries:** Increased library aid by \$1.7 million, supporting our community hubs of knowledge.
- **Youth Employment:** Secured an additional \$5 million for summer youth employment programs.

Public Safety & Community Well-Being

- **Discovery Reforms:** passed and clarified new discovery rules to reduce unnecessary case dismissals while ensuring fair trials by empowering judges to assess the impact of minor discovery oversights. Provided an additional \$15 million to assist District Attorneys and local prosecutors in their discovery compliance efforts.
- **Gun Violence Prevention:** Moves the NYS Office of Gun Violence Prevention from the Department of Health to the Division of Criminal Justice Services and expands community intervention programs.
- **Youth & Mental Health Support:** Invested in services for at-risk youth and school-based mental health initiatives.

Fiscal Responsibility & Tax Relief

- **Reduced State Income Taxes** to the lowest rate in decades for households earning less than \$323,000
- **Middle-Class Tax Cuts:** Cut income tax rates, benefiting approximately 8.3 million taxpayers.
- **Expanded Child Tax Credit:** Enhanced the Empire State Child Tax Credit, providing meaningful relief to working families. Increased the Empire State Child Tax Credit, providing families with a credit of \$1,000 for children under 4 years old and \$500 for children aged 4 to 16.
- **Inflation Rebate Checks** of up to \$400 per family.

Supporting Workers & Small Businesses

- **Unemployment Benefits:** Raised the maximum weekly benefit to \$867, a 72% increase.
- **Self-Employed Tax Relief:** Eliminated payroll taxes for self-employed individuals earning under \$150,000.
- **Small Business Support:** Eliminated \$8 billion in unemployment insurance debt accrued during the pandemic, providing much-needed relief to small businesses.

Strengthening Higher Education

- \$114 million in additional operating aid for SUNY, keeping tuition affordable while maintaining academic excellence.
- Expanded support for **ASAP** (Accelerated Study in Associate Programs) at community colleges, including Nassau Community College and CUNY; and the **ACE program** (Accelerate, Complete, Engage), available at SUNY and CUNY.
- **Opportunity Promise Scholarships:** A new program that offers free community college tuition to the four million working-age adults (age 25-55) in New York who do not have a college degree and are enrolling in a program that will prepare them for jobs in high-demand careers. The program covers tuition, books, and fees at SUNY and CUNY campuses.

Supporting Veterans and Military Families

- **Expanded Gold Star Family Benefits:** After years of advocacy, eligibility for the Gold Star Annuity is now extended beyond parents to all immediate family members of Service Members who die while on active duty, not just in combat. This long-overdue change ensures more families are recognized and supported in their grief.

- **Historic Investment in Veteran Suicide Prevention:** A \$1 million allocation will strengthen efforts to address the mental health crisis among veterans, including outreach, gun safety programs, and expanded access to mental health care. This is a critical step in saving lives and ensuring no veteran is left behind.
- **Increased Relief for Military Families:** The Military Family Relief Fund receives an additional \$350,000 to support those facing financial hardship, helping ease burdens for families who sacrifice alongside their loved ones in uniform.
- **Free Community College for Adult Learners, Including Veterans:** Veterans pursuing careers in high-demand fields will benefit from newly available free tuition at SUNY community colleges.

Healthcare & Mental Healthcare

- **Hospital Support:** Invested \$500 million in financially distressed hospitals and provided additional funding for maternal care and reproductive health services.
- **Mental Health Services:** Allocated \$8 million to pilot Daniel's Law programs for community-based crisis responses, assisting law enforcement with the de-escalation of incidents involving people experiencing a mental health crisis.
- \$70 million appropriated through the **Opioid Settlement Fund**
- \$20.5 million to expand inpatient **mental health beds**
- Clarified mental health involuntary commitment laws and discharge planning requirements for individuals being released from care facilities, including safe and humane transportation. Included additional training for first responders.

Transit & Transportation Infrastructure

- **MTA Support:** Secured dedicated funding to maintain affordability and service for Long Island commuters.
- **Full Funding for the MTA Capital Plan** to ensure crucial repairs and upgrades are completed.
- **Roadway Investments:** \$7 billion allocated for infrastructure upgrades across the state, including local roads and bridges.
- \$100 million increase in **Consolidated Local Street & Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS)** funding over the next two years. This money goes directly to towns, villages, and counties for road repairs and maintenance of our local roads.

Climate & Environmental Protection

- **Sustainable Future Program:** \$1 billion invested to support renewable energy initiatives and the reduction of greenhouse gases in the transportation and housing sectors.

- **Clean Water:** \$500 million dedicated to enhancing water and wastewater infrastructure statewide.
- **Environmental Protection Fund (EPF)** \$425 million allocated, a \$25 million increase over last year.
- **Agriculture Investment:** Boosted support for Cornell's agricultural research and essential farm safety and development programs.

Affordable Housing, Homeowner Legal Programs

- **New Safeguards Against Corporate Home Buyers:** New laws now disincentivize institutional investors and hedge funds from buying up single- and two-family homes, helping preserve the dream of homeownership for Long Islanders. The new rules include a 90-day pause before investment firms can bid on homes and steep penalties for violations.
- **\$40 Million for the Homeowner Protection Program (HOPP):** This critical funding will keep thousands of New Yorkers in their homes by supporting legal and housing counseling services across New York. This is especially important for aging homeowners on Long Island.
- **\$50 Million to Expand Emergency and Resilient Home Repair Programs:** Severe storms and flooding are becoming more common—and more costly. New funding will bolster New York's Rapid Response Home Repair and Resilient Retrofits programs, which have already helped over 1,300 homeowners recover from disasters and strengthen their homes for the future.
- **New Affordable Homebuyer Property Tax Incentive:** A local opt-in property tax break will make it easier for families to purchase affordable homes built by land banks, nonprofits, and government-backed programs.
- **Support for Local Infrastructure to Unlock Housing Supply:** The \$100 million Pro-Housing Supply Fund helps municipalities upgrade water and sewer infrastructure to support new housing in our communities without burdening existing homeowners.
- **Housing Vouchers:** Created a \$50 million Housing Access Voucher Program to help low-income residents secure stable housing.