



Assemblyman CHARLES D. FALL



Legislative and Community Report - 61st Assembly District - Spring 2021



Dear Neighbors,

I'm happy to say that we are finally coming out on the other side of the Coronavirus health crisis. Thanks to all of you for your efforts in wearing your masks, keeping your distance, washing your hands, getting tested, and for receiving your COVID-19 vaccine. Although there is a light at the end of the tunnel we are not there yet. Please continue to follow the recommendations of public health experts.

In addition to following COVID-19 recommendations, our community has come together in a time when it's needed most. I've witnessed people come together to donate food and other necessities to those in need, peacefully protest, attend the vigil to honor the lives lost to Anti-Asian violence, cleaning up litter in locations with the most need, and so much more. Your help and dedication to our community inspires me and I'm so proud to serve as your representative to the New York State Assembly. I thank you all for going above and beyond.

My colleagues and I in the NYS legislature have been making strides to pass crucial legislative and budgetary resources for the 61st District. I would like to share with you some of the highlights of the 2021-2022 Budget and Legislative Session. I wish you good health and safety,

Charles D. Fall
Member of Assembly,
61st Assembly District

Budget Highlights for Staten Island and NYC

This year the State Legislature passed an historic \$212 billion budget to jump start New York economic recovery due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The overall budget was positively impacted by federal aid which included:

- \$2.3 billion in funds to help tenants late on rent.
- \$1 billion in grants and tax credits for small businesses that suffered from the economic downturn.

Transportation:

Once again, this year the Staten Island resident toll rate was protected and enhanced.

- \$5.2 million was restored to keep the resident toll discount intact and keep the rate at \$2.75 each way.

Public Safety and Gun Violence

- Provided \$20 million for state and local crime reduction and youth justice and gang prevention programs.
- Secured \$8.5 million in additional funding for programs to combat gun violence.
- Adds to \$25 million to the Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes grant program.

This program boosts safety and security at New York's nonpublic schools, community centers and day care facilities at risk of hate crimes or attacks because of their ideology, beliefs or mission. This new funding may also be used to safeguard against cyber related hate crimes or attacks.

Human Services:

- Camelot of Staten Island receives \$25,000 for operational costs.
- Funding for Staten Island Legal Services receives \$200,000 for legal assistance to families related to special education services and immigration relief.
- Restores \$1 million to prevent the consolidation of the Institute for Basic Research in Developmental Disabilities (IBR) with the NYS Psychiatric Institute (NYSPI).
- Human Services Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) which includes \$46.2 million to provide a 1 percent COLA to not-for-profits licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized by OPWDD, OMH, and OASAS.
- Restores \$12 million for local assistance payments for non-Medicaid payments under OPWDD.
- Restores \$5.25 million for the fee-for-service Medicaid rate for OPWDD programs.

Education and Higher Education/College of Staten Island:

- With passage of \$100 million for CUNY expansion projects, College of Staten Island (CSI) will be receiving funding for restorations, repairs and security lighting.
- \$42.6 million for the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP), an increase of \$7.1 million.
- Restores \$35 million in Bundy Aid to support private colleges and universities.
- \$29.5 billion in School Aid. \$1.4 billion (7.6 percent) Foundation Aid increase. Approximately 75 percent of this increase is targeted to high-need school districts.
- \$13 billion in Federal Aid to Public Schools to safely open our schools.
- \$500 million in Emergency Federal Assistance to nonpublic schools.

Housing and Rental and Landlord Assistance:

- Provides \$325 million in capital funds to housing authorities statewide, including \$200 million for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and \$125 million for other housing authorities. This is great news for Cassidy-Lafayette, Richmond Terrace, Stapleton and West Brighton.
- Combined federal and state efforts provide \$2.3 billion for rental assistance as well as \$100 million in state aid to provide for hardship cases for landlords and renters that are outside of federal eligibility.
- Extends the covered period for mortgage forbearance to either Dec. 31, 2021, or until current rules that closed or restricted businesses due to COVID-19 are no longer in effect, whichever is later.
- Provides \$100 million to allow nonprofits to convert commercial properties and hotels in New York City into affordable residential housing for homeless and the most vulnerable.
- Allocates \$65.6 million in resources from the Housing Finance Agency (HFA) to support adult homeless shelters in New York City.

2021 Legislative Highlights

January 2021:

The Assembly passed legislation to help hard working New Yorkers and small businesses across the state weather the storm of the COVID-19 pandemic. The legislative package allows workers to collect unemployment insurance (UI) while working part time, prevents businesses from being charged higher rates for UI and puts a stay on evictions and foreclosures for small businesses.

February 2021:

The Assembly passed legislation to extend the provisions granted last year that ensures families of municipal frontline workers who lost their lives to COVID-19 as a result of their service receive the benefits they deserve.

March 2021:

The Assembly passed a series of bills to increase safety and improve the quality of life for New Yorkers living in nursing homes. The bills included in the package address issues including quality improvements, visitation, oversight, transparency and immunity from liability.

The Assembly has passed legislation expanding unemployment insurance eligibility to include workers who have had to leave their jobs in order to meet their child care obligations.

The Assembly passed the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA), which will legalize the adult use of marijuana in New York for individuals 21 years of age and older and establishes the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) and the Cannabis Control Board to regulate the cannabis industry. The legislation would use revenue from adult-use marijuana to invest in education and communities that have been disproportionately targeted by state and federal drug laws.

April 2021:

The Assembly passed the Hero Act, which establishes health and safety standards to protect New Yorkers from airborne infectious diseases in the workplace.

In honor of Earth Day, the Assembly passed a package of legislation designed to safeguard the environment and protect public health. The legislation covers a variety of environmental protections aimed at reducing waste and emissions, as well as protecting our communities from harmful contaminants.

We will continue to pass important legislation throughout the remainder of the 2021 Legislative Session. Including, but not limited to safe staffing for our hospital and nursing home nurse staffs. You can also find more detailed information on the 2021 budget and priority legislation at <https://nyassembly.gov> or call my legislative office at 518.455.4677.

Assemblyman Fall's Priority Legislation



A.3354-B: Grants public and private employees four hours of excused leave pay to receive each coronavirus vaccine.

- It is vital that these essential civil servants, which include health care workers, emergency medical service personnel, staff in congregate care facilities, police officers, firefighters, corrections officers, teachers, and more, receive the vaccine in as expeditious a manner as possible in order to continue serving on the frontlines of this pandemic at decreased risk to themselves and their families. (Signed into law as Chapter 77) At a time when people were choosing between work and getting vaccines, I made sure this passed.

A.5713: Directs the Commissioner of Health to conduct a study of the delivery of ambulatory and other medical care in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This legislation's intent is to clarify notification of a community diagnostic and treatment center during a pandemic and or under general circumstance.

- There are no public hospitals located on Staten Island.
- Residents rely on private practice clinics, urgent care, and ambulatory health clinics for services, including physicals, injury and illness, lab tests and screening, pediatric care, and women's health.
- The closure or relocation of any one provider can disenfranchise whole communities and leave vulnerable persons without convenient access to care.

A.2564: Amends the education law, in relation to updating school concussion management and response protocols and increasing concussion data collection and reporting. This bill is entitled the "Concussion Management and Awareness Improvement Act of 2020."

- This bill would expand the CMAA to cover nonpublic schools and travel youth sports teams, and require schools to establish concussion management teams, rather than simply authorizing them to do so.
- It would also update the CMAA to codify SED guidance that students should return to the classroom with no limitations before they resume athletic activities.
- Additionally, it would require concussion management teams to report more specific information about concussions to ensure that our approach to treating and preventing concussions is informed by comprehensive data.

Standing in Solidarity Against Asian Hate Crimes



All Americans, especially New Yorkers should be proud of our nation's diversity and share a commitment to tolerance and respect for our fellow citizens, no matter their race, religion and ethnicity.

It is incumbent upon all of us to reduce hate violence and bias-motivated incidents. They have a reverberating effect striking fear not only in the individual victim, but also in the broader community. These incidents further splinter and segregate our communities by eroding the diverse fabric of our everyday life. I will continue to work with community advocates, leaders and authorities on addressing this troubling spike. Again, an act of hate toward one, is an act of hate towards all.

Around the Community

Gun Buyback



My office joined District Attorney Michael McMahon and the NYPD to organize a gun buyback in Mariners Harbor in late April and it was a success. Over 50 handguns and shotguns were removed from our streets on the North Shore. Thank you, Pastor Watson, for hosting this event and to Chief Vega, Deputy Investigator Bruce Ceparano, and Bishop Brown.

Restaurant Revitalization



I am grateful for Senator Schumer's tireless advocacy for the business owners of New York and for ensuring that the American Rescue Plan provides over \$28 billion to support the recovery of our restaurants. To apply, visit www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/covid-19-relief-options/restaurant-revitalization-fund.

Amount of food boxes donated – Over 500



My office has had a partnership with Project Hospitality for a long time. These last few months we were able to use that partnership to provide many of the surrounding neighborhoods in the North Shore with food donations. From Park Hill, to Stapleton, to St. George, and everywhere in between. With the help from their volunteers, we have donated over 500 boxes to date with more than half of that during the celebration of Ramadan. It is always a pleasure to not only distribute groceries to the families of Staten Island, but to also talk to them in-person in a time where those interactions seldom occur.

Faber Park



Faber Park is now open to all. This project was swiftly delivered by Commissioner Silver who is now heading into retirement. I thank him for the fantastic work accomplished at this park. The budget for this project was \$6,585,000 and provides new active recreation areas, seating, lighting, and an expanded public gathering area. The fences have also been lowered as a part of the Parks without Borders Initiative. There is also a new accessible path from the upper part of the park to the lower. Thank you Commissioner Ricciardone for your leadership.

Community Resources

Workforce Information

Staten Island Workforce 1 is a NYC Department of Small Business Services resource that prepares and connects qualified candidates to job opportunities in NYC. Workforce 1 prepares and helps New Yorkers to find jobs by:

- Developing job search skills through resume and interviewing workshops.
- Training residents to acquire skills in growing fields.
- Connecting jobseekers to employers with open positions.
- The Staten Island Chamber of Commerce (www.sichamber.com) and the Staten Island Business Outreach Center (www.siboc.org) also support local employers and job seekers. Visit their sites to find support.
- New York State Labor Law helps to protect employees in the workplace. Know your rights as a worker such as Worker's Compensation and Fair Wages.
- If you are injured on the job, you can receive workers' compensation regardless of your immigration status. Contact the Advocate for Injured Workers for help at 800-580-6665.
- Fair and minimum wage, plus overtime laws apply to all workers, even if you are undocumented or paid: hourly, daily, or weekly and if you are paid in cash, by check or off the books.

Call 888-469-7365 to ask about filing a claim if you believe you are not paid the minimum wage, or you do not receive additional money for the extra time worked.

Financial Counseling

The NYC Financial Empowerment Center is a free one-on-one financial counseling service provided by NYC Consumer Affairs to support you in reaching your financial goals. Counselors can help individuals develop a strategy to minimize debt, access federal, state, and local resources, receive student loan debt tips, and more. During COVID-19, all sessions are conducted over the phone. Visit www.NYC.gov/dca to schedule an appointment.

Safety and Support

Domestic Violence Support. Survivors of domestic violence may receive temporary housing, emergency shelter and supportive services for themselves and their children. If you or someone you know is in need of supportive services, please call the Staten Island Family Justice Center mainline at 718-697-4300 and leave a message, call Safe Horizon's 24-hour hotline (Ilámenos para ayudarle) 800-621-HOPE (4673) or text confidentially with an advocate with the NYS Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline at 844-997-2121 for help today.

Brightpoint Health Center provides comprehensive medical and behavioral health care, including substance use disorder services and addiction treatment. Call 855-681-8700 to request an appointment.

Legal Assistance

Staten Island Legal Aid Society provides quality legal representation to low-income New Yorkers. If you need assistance from their Criminal Defense Practice or Juvenile Rights Practice, call 212-577-3300. If you need assistance with a civil suit call 347-422-5333 and call 888-663-6680 to reach their Access to Benefits Helpline.

Veteran Services

Staten Island Veterans Center is here to support United States veterans in need. If you need to talk with someone confidentially, call 718-816-4499 Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

COVID-19 RESOURCES

Where to Get a Vaccine

Anyone who lives, works, or studies in New York is now eligible to receive the COVID-19 Vaccine. The following locations are vaccinating New Yorkers without an appointment. For a list of updated times and locations, please visit www1.nyc.gov/assets/coronavirus/downloads/walk-up-vax-sites.pdf

If you'd prefer to make an appointment at any of these locations, please call 1-877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692) or visit vax4nyc.nyc.gov

To view other locations throughout Staten Island and New York City, please visit <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/>

Northwell SIUH - Empire Outlets

55B Richmond Terrace, Space 348

Staten Island, 10301

Vaccine offered: Pfizer

Gotham Health, Vanderbilt

165 Vanderbilt Ave

Staten Island, 10304

Vaccine offered: Moderna

Ocean Breeze Athletic Complex

625 Father Capodanno Blvd

Staten Island, 10305

Vaccine offered: Moderna

St. Joseph St. Thomas School

50 Maguire Ave

Staten Island, 10309

Vaccine offered: Pfizer

Northwell SIUH - SI Mall

(Former Babies R Us)

280 Marsh Ave

Staten Island, 10314

Vaccine offered: Pfizer

Free Transportation to COVID-19

Vaccination Sites

If you are a city resident who is 65 and older or have a disability with no other way to get to a vaccination site, please call 1-877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692) to schedule free transportation.

For Homebound Citizens

If you are unable to leave your home, please call 1-877-VAX4NYC (877-829-4692) or visit <https://forms.cityofnewyork.us/f/homebound> to schedule an in-home vaccination.

For COVID-19 Tests

To view a full list of NYC Health + Hospitals walk-in testing sites available for free on the North Shore, visit www.nychealthandhospitals.org/covid-19-testing-sites/#stateniland.

To find additional testing locations, visit www.coronavirus.health.ny.gov/find-test-site-near-you but please call before going, as some of these locations may charge a fee.

Helped hundreds Constituents receive Vaccines

As the state began to make COVID-19 vaccines available for seniors, it became apparent that the systems put in place were not easily navigated. My staff got to work assisting everyone 65 years of age and over who contacted us to help set up appointments. While our efforts expanded to everyone who became eligible throughout the weeks, we maintained a laser eye focus on those most vulnerable to the virus and in most need of the vaccine. I am happy to say that in the early stages of vaccine distribution we helped secure over 300 people their first and second appointments. My office continues to support and guide community members in order to yield a high vaccination rate, curb the virus and get Staten Island and New York State back to normal. If you have any difficulties finding or accessing a vaccination site, please do not hesitate to call my district office at 718-442-9932.



New York State Assembly, Albany, New York 12248



Assemblyman **CHARLES D. FALL**

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Spring 2021

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