



Assembly Member
**HARVEY
EPSTEIN**



74TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT • REPORTS TO THE PEOPLE • SUMMER 2023

Dear Neighbor,

I hope you're enjoying spring. With the budget passed and the legislative session nearing its end, I wanted to update you on the outcome and let you know about some upcoming events.

See you around the district,

Harvey

Budget Highlights

Environment

- **The All-Electric New Buildings Act:** We passed a first-in-the-nation law to end the over-reliance on fossil fuels by requiring new buildings to be all-electric. Starting in December of 2025 with buildings 7 stories or less, buildings will be prohibited from installing fossil-fuel equipment and building systems. There are some exemptions for certain buildings such as hospitals and restaurants and the new law will not limit the use of gas stoves in existing buildings. Under the law, we will begin to shift investment away from fossil fuel equipment and systems and into more sustainable equipment.
- **Environmental Protection Fund:** We allocated \$400 million for capital projects that focus on environmental conservation and sustainability. These projects can include funding for municipal parks, land acquisition, and environmental justice initiatives.
- **Renewable Energy Projects:** The budget authorizes the New York Power Authority (NYPA) to build renewable energy projects to fill the gaps in meeting the goals of the CLCPA.

Criminal Justice

- **More Funding for Public Defenders and District Attorneys:** The budget included \$160 million to public defenders and district attorneys, to ensure they can meaningfully comply with current discovery reform laws.

Education

- **Foundation Aid:** We fully funded foundation aid for public schools, at \$34 billion – the largest education investment in New York's history.
- **Charter Schools:** We protected public school education and funding by limiting the number of charter schools the Governor could bring back online.
- **CUNY/SUNY Funding:** We allocated \$103 million for SUNY schools and \$53 million for CUNY schools as well as increasing funds for operating CUNY and SUNY operating expenses. We also protected student costs, by ensuring New Yorkers would not see increases to in-state tuition.

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Budget Highlights (continued from page 1)

- **Free School Meal Expansions:** There will be an additional \$134 million in funding to ensure more low-income students have access to free school meals and that the schools that are eligible are able to provide for this program for their students.

Housing

- **Emergency Rental Assistance Program:** A key feature of the budget, the state allocated \$391 million for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program for public housing residents, including NYCHA and section 8 tenants.
- **NYCHA:** Along with the important ERAP funding to assist with rental arrears, the budget includes \$135 million for NYCHA to invest in capital improvements.

Healthcare

- **Reproductive Access:** We are allocating \$100.7 million to fund abortion providers, another important victory

for all New Yorkers in ensuring that New York remains a safe haven for reproductive rights.

- **Mental Health:** The budget includes \$1 billion to expand care services such as increasing inpatient psychiatric treatment capacity and expanding outpatient services so that New Yorkers have access to the quality mental healthcare they need, when they need it.

People with Disabilities

- **Expanded employment opportunities:** After our report detailed the barriers to employment access for people with disabilities, including in the government, the budget raised the caps on set asides for civil service positions for people with disabilities.
- **Higher Education Disability Support Funding:** We were able to double the amount of funding for students with disabilities to ensure they have the best chance to succeed in college.

We also included a new MTA bus pilot program, where one bus route would be completely free in each borough. The budget also includes the result of a tough battle over the minimum wage, where we did win an increase to \$17/hour that will be phased over the next couple of years. While we are glad to see an increase in the minimum wage, we will continue to fight for a higher wage.

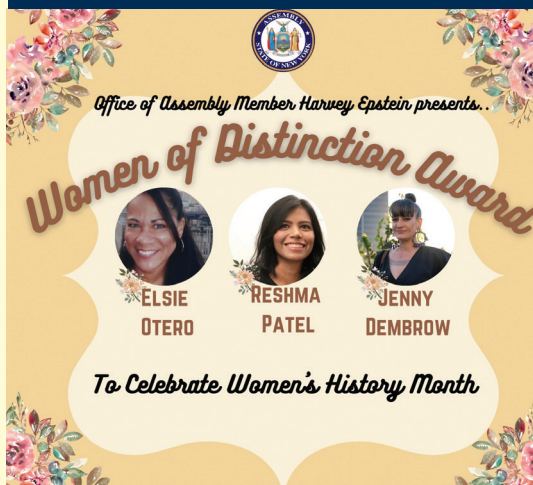
Community Update

Black History Month



In February, we celebrated Black History Month by honoring two of our incredible community members. Freddina Fulton and Marquis Jenkins received proclamations for instrumental community leadership and impact.

Honorees for Women's History Month



I was proud to honor Elsie Otero, Reshma Patel, and Jenny Dembrow this March for Women's History Month. They've made contributions to our district through leadership on tenant issues, supporting immigrants and the arts, and empowering young women!

ASPCA Mobile Grooming Event



This April, we partnered with the ASPCA to host an incredible mobile grooming event outside our district office. ASPCA makes it possible for pet owners to groom their pets with convenience and at no cost. The ASPCA mobile units have improved the well-being of 1,051 pets to date. Grooming events like these ensure that we can maintain the health of our furry friends, without the financial or logistical challenges that can get in the way. If there is continued interest, I look forward to hosting another event in the future.

Legislative Victories



Our Reproductive Rights Bill is Now Law!

In May, Governor Hochul signed our bill, A1395C/ S1213B which expands access to reproductive healthcare for students on CUNY & SUNY campuses by requiring schools to provide medication abortion on campus or a referral to a nearby provider, including telehealth providers. I was proud to stand with our bill co-sponsor State Senator Cordell Cleare, New York State Attorney General Letitia James and incredible advocates such as Reproductive Justice Collective who helped make this bill a reality. The fight for abortion access and protecting reproductive rights is ongoing and New York will continue to be a safe harbor for all.

My Bill on Nonreligious Treatment Options Passes Assembly

We are proud that our bill A05074 to ensure New Yorkers that are court mandated to attend a substance use treatment program can exercise their right to participate in a nonreligious treatment program. We know that substance use treatment works best when the program aligns with the beliefs and values of the person receiving treatment. New Yorkers continue to grapple with substance abuse issues and ensuring they have appropriate treatment is key to a path to recovery. While the Governor vetoed the bill last year, we are determined to work with the executive to ensure a better outcome this year.



My Bill to Streamline the Application Process for NY State

In honor of Disability Awareness Day, the Assembly passed my bill, A1200, to streamline the application process for disability services by New York State Agencies. This bill establishes a commission to examine, evaluate and make recommendations for new laws with respect to how the state should streamline eligibility requirements and processes for its programs and services to assist people with disabilities.

Staff Update



Meet our new Community Liaison, Kathleen T. German. Kathleen was born and raised in Inwood by her Dominican grandmother and mother. She graduated Cum Laude from the College of Staten Island in 2019, earning a Political Science bachelor's degree. She is honored to be working alongside her teammates to humbly serve the constituents of the 74th Assembly District. She is a foodie, so her favorite part is the cool restaurants. If you see her around our district, please say hello!

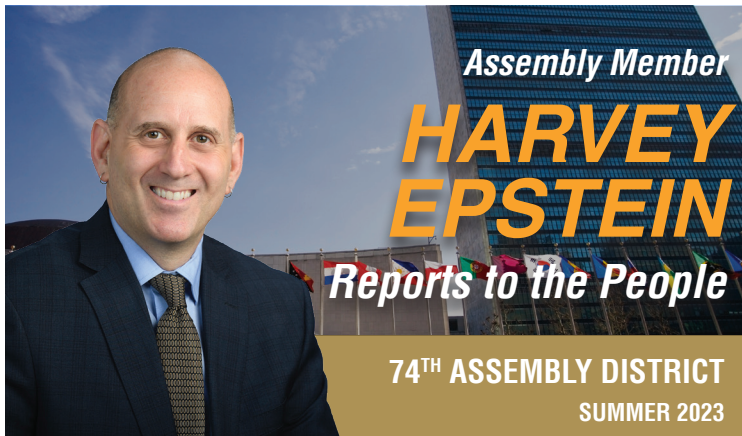
Our 2023 Summer Reading Challenge

We invite our young constituents to participate in the New York State Assembly's Annual Summer Reading Challenge, held in partnership with New York State Libraries. The theme for this year's challenge is "All Together Now" to celebrate kindness and friendship. Those who complete the challenge will be awarded a state Assembly Excellence in Reading certificate to celebrate their achievement.

The Summer Reading Challenge asks children to read for at least 15 minutes a day for at least 40 days during the months of July and August. Children can read by themselves or with a partner or caretaker and then mark the days on the calendar provided. After marking 40 days or more, they can submit the calendar to the Assemblymember's office to receive their certificate in the mail. New Yorkers are also encouraged to visit their local library for summer reading recommendations and a host of other programs and services.

You can find a library near you at the New York State Libraries website, nysl.nysed.gov. For more information about the Summer Reading Challenge, please visit summerreadingnys.org, email district74@nyassembly.gov.

New York State Assembly, Albany, New York 12248



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Hang with Harvey

Join me at one of the following Hang with Harvey events this summer. I want to hear from you about issues in our neighborhoods.

Please call 212-979-9696 with any questions

1. Wednesday July 12th from 9AM to 11AM in Madison Square Park just inside the entrance at 26th Street and 5th Avenue
2. Wednesday August 2nd from 9AM to 11AM at the Stuy Town Community Center (449 East 14th Street)
3. Wednesday August 16th from 4PM to 6PM outside my district office (107 Avenue B)

Shredding Event & Mini Resource Fair

We've partnered with Bellevue Hospital to provide constituents access to a shredding truck to shred sensitive documents. Join us on **July 15th from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM on East 24th Street between 1st & 2nd Avenues.**

No electronics or batteries, paper only. One standard size file Box (15" x 12" x 10") per person.

Please call 212-979-9696 or email district74@nyassembly.gov with any questions.

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