



# Assemblymember Gabriella A. Romero



Winter 2025

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## Dear Neighbor,

As we enter 2026 together, I've been thinking a lot about the moment we're in as a community and as a state. New Yorkers are navigating big questions about affordability, safety, and the health of our democracy, and the decisions made in the coming months of 2026 will shape the 109th Assembly District and New York State for years. In times like these, feeling connected to the people who represent you matters. Knowing that someone is listening, showing up, and doing the work matters. And that is the commitment I carry with me into the new legislative session.

This off-season period has been one of the most energizing stretches of my time in office. From Fall Frolics to Pints in the Park, from neighborhood conversations to late-night phone calls, I've loved being in and connected to every corner of the 109th Assembly District. Those moments and conversations are the foundation of how I serve. They remind me that policy is personal, and that my best ideas come directly from you.

With that said, together, we've hosted Blood Drives, Senior Resource Fairs, Utility Clinics, Community Bashes, historic bike tours in Altamont, Town Halls in every corner, and so much more. These gatherings are investments in the social fabric of our district.



As we head into a busy and consequential session, I'm committed to the same transparency, accessibility, and hands-on problem-solving that you've come to expect. You deserve a state government that works for you, responds to you, and reflects your values, and I'm lucky to have a hard-working, boots-on-the-ground team that cares about the issues in the District. Pictured below is my incredible team. From left to right: Jake Eisland, Chief of Staff; Asia Harris, Director of Communications; Erin DeVinne, Community Liaison; Folake Oyedokun, District Director.



This newsletter is your guide to what's ahead and how we can shape it. I hope you'll stay connected with me throughout this legislative session. If you ever need help, have a question, or want to share an idea, please reach out by phone or email. Your voice is not only welcome, it's essential.

With gratitude and determination,

*Gabriella A. Romero*

Assemblymember Gabriella A. Romero



## ■ Bills I Care About in 2026:

An overview of the bills I'm fighting for... crafted to meet rising community needs and deliver progress on housing, safety, and sustainability.

### ■ **A6316: Allowing Dying Declarations in Court**

This bill formally allows statements made by someone who believes they are about to die to be used as evidence in court. It clarifies an important legal standard, and it brings New York in line with long-standing legal practice used in many other states.

### ■ **A6443: Supporting Local Breweries with Expanded On-Site Sales**

This bill allows licensed breweries and farm breweries to sell merchandise beyond beer and operate additional small businesses on their premises. It boosts local entrepreneurship and supports New York's growing craft beverage industry. Put simply: this bill provides more flexibility for small producers.

### ■ **A7595: Right to Preventative Maintenance of Wheelchairs**

This bill directs the NYS Department of Health to establish a program ensuring people who rely on wheelchairs get preventive maintenance and repairs. Regular maintenance keeps people mobile, safe, and independent, and can prevent costly hospital visits from equipment failures. It's about dignity and reliable access to essential medical devices.

### ■ **A8850: Protecting Patients When Insurance Networks Change**

This bill ensures that if your doctor or specialist is suddenly dropped from your insurance network due to a dispute between the insurer and provider, you won't be left without options. It creates a new special enrollment period so consumers can switch to a plan that still covers their preferred provider. This protects continuity of care and prevents people from having to choose between paying out-of-pocket or losing access to trusted medical professionals. The bill responds to recent Capital Region disputes that left thousands of patients in limbo and provides a fair remedy for situations outside a consumer's control.

### ■ **A8920: Placing Restrictions on the Sale of Flare Guns**

This bill would prohibit the sale of flare guns to anyone under 21 and requires age verification with government issued-ID. The law balances safety concerns with reasonable exemptions for law enforcement, military, boating, and supervised programs. It establishes both civil and criminal penalties to ensure meaningful enforcement without over-penalizing first-time offenders.

### ■ **A9076: Combating the Federal Government - Standing up for our Rights**

We have to start thinking creatively to protect New Yorkers. I'm proud of this bill that I introduced with Senator Myrie, a fellow lawyer, that uses an important piece of federal law, Section 1983, to our advantage. This bill gives New Yorkers a clear way to take action in New York's state courts when a government official violates their federal constitutional rights. This bill allows people to seek meaningful remedies, including compensation for harm, punitive damages, court orders to stop unlawful behavior, and attorney's fees. Federal inaction has left many residents without a path to justice when their rights are violated, but this law fills that gap by allowing you to sue in state court.

At its core, this legislation is about standing up for everyday people, defending civil liberties, and making sure that government power is used constitutionally. With this legislation, New York is sending a clear message: your rights matter, and you have the power to fight to make sure they are enforceable.

### ■ **A9181: Statewide Student Attendance Dashboard**

This bill creates a publicly accessible, statewide dashboard tracking student attendance and absenteeism across all school districts. It provides timely, standardized data so parents, educators, and policymakers can see trends and take action. Chronic absenteeism has become a serious concern, and this tool will help identify schools and districts that need additional support. By increasing transparency, the dashboard strengthens accountability and helps guide interventions to improve student engagement and equity.





# ■ Assemblymember Gabriella A. Romero’s 2025 Funding Recap:



While I love legislating and addressing constituent concerns, one of my most important responsibilities as a legislator is allocating discretionary funds. I’m proud of the programs we created and the projects we supported this year. Each commitment reflects

a real need in our district that came directly from you. Below, you’ll find a breakdown of the Capital (physical projects and equipment) and Operating (programmatic) grants we awarded this year.

## Operating Funds:

- New York Immigration Coalition - \$10,000
- United Tenants of Albany - \$20,000
- New Scotland Community Food Pantry - \$10,000
- Sweet Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church Soup Kitchen - \$10,000
- Pride Center of the Capital Region - \$30,000
- Community Caregivers - \$10,000
- Family Promise of the Capital Region - \$10,000
- Underground Railroad Education Center - \$30,000
- Jewish Family Services - \$90,000
- City of Albany Holiday Market & Youth Empowerment Programming - \$80,000

I know that the process for obtaining state funds can be confusing, and sometimes even intentionally complicated. That’s why I hosted an event with the Executive Chamber and leaders of the Statewide Financial System to guide nonprofits and anyone interested in grants through the process. Together, we cut through the red tape and pulled back the curtain on how to access these resources. I loved hosting this event for the community and look forward to doing it again next year. If you missed it and would like the recording, just email me! There are many grant opportunities beyond what my office offers, and the presentation covered how to navigate the portal and the websites where these opportunities are listed. If you’d like to apply for my 2026 discretionary funds, they are now live on my Assembly website.

## Capital Funds:

- In Our Own Voices, Inc. - \$100,000 for renovation of the IOOV facility
- Whitney M. Young, Jr., Health Center - \$100,000 for expansion and upgrade of the dental clinic
- Village of Voorheesville - \$100,000 for construction and restoration at the Voorheesville Historic Business District sites
- Cathedral of All Saints - \$100,000 for historic Guild House remediation at the Cathedral of All Saints in Albany
- City of Albany - \$300,000 for purchasing of equipment for the Albany West Community Center





ASSEMBLYMEMBER  
GABRIELLA A. ROMERO  
is seeking nominations for the

# 2026 WOMEN OF DISTINCTION AWARDS



Together, let's recognize the extraordinary women  
who are making our communities stronger!

You can find the nomination form on my NYS  
Assembly Website, or request the link by emailing  
romerog@nyassembly.gov. Nominations must be  
submitted by April 15, 2025.

This year, we celebrated an extraordinary group of women making a real impact in the 109th Assembly District. I was honored to present my annual Women of Distinction Award to Ellen Manning, Annette Brown, Melody Harkness-Mobebe, Deborah Engel, and Anne Savage for their inspiring accomplishments and dedication to our community.

The portal for next year's nominations is now open! I encourage you to visit my website and submit your recommendations for the next group of remarkable women to be recognized as Women of Distinction.



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Albany, New York 12248

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