

2019 End of Year Review

Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon

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Dear Neighbor,

As 2019 draws to a close, I want to take this moment to reflect on all the important legislation we passed in the state Assembly this year. From keeping our neighborhoods safe to reforming antiquated election laws, there were some major victories for our communities.

Take a look inside to see how I've worked to make the Mohawk Valley an even better place to call home. And remember, I'm here to help you. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Marianne Buttenschon



Session Highlights

Honoring a local hero

Whitesboro Police Officer Kevin F. Crossley tragically lost his life protecting his community in 2018 and will forever be remembered as a hero. To honor his memory, Assemblywoman Buttenschon sponsored and passed legislation to rename a portion of Route 69 in the village of Whitesboro after Officer Crossley (Ch. 101 of 2019). Assemblywoman Buttenschon hosted a dedication ceremony on Aug. 19 to rename the road, and was joined by local officials and members of Officer Crossley's family.

Expanding opportunities for our communities

To help ensure that our communities have access to available state resources, Assemblywoman Buttenschon sponsored legislation designating Ferguson, Moyer, Mud Creek, Ninemile, Oriskany, Reall, Sauquoit, Six Mile and Wood creeks as "inland waterways" (Ch. 278 of 2019). This designation allows municipalities along these waterways to be eligible for Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) funding and to create or adopt an LWRP, opening up avenues to fund and support waterfront redevelopment plans.



Prohibiting unfair business practices

Assemblywoman Buttenschon fought to ensure that homeowners already dealing with the stress of property damage caused by severe weather don't have to worry about being taken advantage of by unscrupulous roofing contractors, known as "storm chasers," who provide substandard work, promising quick and efficient roof restoration through high-pressure sales tactics. Assemblywoman Buttenschon sponsored a measure that cracks down on this practice by requiring written contracts and allowing

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homeowners more leeway to cancel if, for instance, their insurance claim for the roofing work has been denied (Ch. 550 of 2019).

Making your voices heard

Assemblywoman Buttenschon supported a number of measures that reform our state's antiquated election laws to make it easier for Mohawk Valley residents to cast their ballots. The legislation increases voter turnout by establishing a nine-day early voting period before any election, combining the state and federal primary dates and allowing anyone to receive an absentee ballot upon request (Ch. 6, 5 of 2019, A.778). Assemblywoman Buttenschon also helped pass a law limiting the power of wealthy special interests by closing the limited liability company (LLC) loophole (Ch. 4 of 2019).

To simplify the voter registration process, Assemblywoman Buttenschon also supported legislation to allow for same-day voter registration, instruct county boards of elections to automatically transfer voter enrollment for New Yorkers who move from one county to another and allow 16- and 17-year-olds to pre-register to vote (A.777, Ch. 3, 2 of 2019).

Protecting gun owners' rights

Assemblywoman Buttenschon knows that the responsible safe storage of firearms helps keep Mohawk Valley families safe. However, the safe storage law, which was passed earlier this year, could potentially penalize responsible gun owners and keep people under 16 from learning to correctly handle a firearm in a safe, supervised environment. The law requires gun owners to lock up firearms or render them incapable of being fired by using an appropriate locking device if a child under the age of 16 resides in the home (Ch. 135 of 2019). To ensure a person under 16 can access a gun for lawful use, Assemblywoman Buttenschon sponsored and passed an amendment to the safe storage law clarifying that they can continue to use firearms at a gun range under immediate supervision or if they have a hunting license or permit (Ch. 133 of 2019).



Putting education first

Mandating that teacher evaluations be based on students' state test results not only put our local school districts at a disadvantage, but our students as well. Forcing teachers to teach toward a test, instead of following a curriculum that works best for their students, set some kids up for failure. That's why Assemblywoman Buttenschon helped pass a law eliminating the mandate, letting teachers get back to doing what they do best – teaching the next generation of leaders (Ch. 27 of 2019).

Giving a voice to child victims

Assemblywoman Buttenschon fought to ensure that victims of childhood sexual abuse have the opportunity to seek justice against their abusers by helping pass the Child Victims Act (Ch. 11 of 2019). The law extends the statute of limitations for criminal cases, allowing them to be commenced until the victim's 28th birthday for felonies and their 25th birthday for misdemeanors. It also pushes back the statute of limitations to permit civil actions to be brought until a victim turns 55 and creates a one-year window for adult survivors to pursue civil cases that expired under the previous statute of limitations.

Supporting victims of crime

Assemblywoman Buttenschon stands with crime victims and has worked to ensure they can access the resources they need to heal and seek justice. Earlier this year, she helped pass a legislative package that ensures they're financially supported as they begin a new chapter of their lives (Ch. 291, 179, 178 of 2019, A.2566). The legislation also expands the definition of rape, supports victims of human trafficking and protects the rights of victims or tenants to report a criminal act without fear of losing their housing as a result of landlord actions or local nuisance laws (A.794-C, A.459-A, Ch. 263 of 2019).

Helping victims of domestic violence

Domestic violence cases are severely and tragically underreported. However, in 2016, Oneida County had the highest number of reported cases of domestic violence in New York State, which only highlights how important it is that New York takes statewide action. This is why Assemblywoman Buttenschon supported a number of measures to help victims of domestic violence distance themselves from their abusers, including allowing them to cancel cable or cellphone contracts and vote by special ballot by mail and streamlining the procedure for early lease termination by victims of domestic violence (Ch. 186, 150 of 2019, A.4267-A). New laws also prohibit employers from discriminating against victims and expand the definition of "victim of domestic violence" in the Social Services Law, recognizing that domestic violence can take many forms (Ch. 176, 153 of 2019).

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Ensuring equality among banks

The financial industry is continuously evolving, which is why Assemblywoman Buttenschon sponsored legislation to ensure that state-chartered banks dedicated to serving New Yorkers are on a level playing field with federal banks. The measure provides a five-year extension of the state's banking "wild card" law, which authorizes the Superintendent of Financial Services to permit state-chartered banking organizations to exercise banking powers that are available to federal banks (Ch. 217 of 2019). Without this legislation, state banks would be forced to wait to take full advantage of expanded powers and opportunities in the financial industry that federal banks can immediately access.



Community Highlights

Community information sessions

Assemblywoman Buttenschon wants to ensure that Mohawk Valley residents are always informed. To that end, Assemblywoman Buttenschon hosted two Lyme Disease Prevention Seminars this year in Whitesboro and Frankfort to educate the community on proper safety precautions and ways to protect themselves from tick bites. Assemblywoman Buttenschon also hosted a climate change seminar in Rome with guest speaker Dr. Kenneth Mazlen, an associate professor at SUNY Polytechnic Institute, and another in Utica with guest speaker Dr. Aaron Strong, an assistant professor of environmental studies at Hamilton College. Additionally, Assemblywoman Buttenschon hosted senior information sessions to keep our senior citizens updated about the resources and services available to them.

Community outreach

Assemblywoman Buttenschon makes it a priority to be involved in the many communities that make up the 119th Assembly District. This year, she attended 323 events, including ones she hosted and collaborated on to help honor local residents, keep our children engaged and enrich the local cultural scene, such as:

- The 2019 Summer Reading Challenge awarded students who continued reading over the summer with a certificate from Assemblywoman Buttenschon's office.
- The 2019 Winter Accessories Drive collected new hats, gloves and scarves for children and young adults for the Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency, the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees and Upstate Cerebral Palsy. It was hosted in collaboration with the Utica Comets and Utica Football Club.

- First Responders of the Year Awards was Buttenschon's inaugural awards ceremony to honor first responders in the 119th Assembly District for all that they do to keep us safe.
- Buttenschon's Veterans Photo Campaign requested that local residents send in a photo of a veteran in their life and describe the impact that brave individual had on them. The photos were featured in Buttenschon's office and on her Facebook page.
- At the Rome arts roundtable, Buttenschon sat down with several arts-based nonprofits and organizations to discuss how to revitalize the local arts community, increase collaboration and showcase the city's creative side.
- At community collaboration meetings, Buttenschon met with various area officials in the Mohawk Valley to discuss upcoming activities and budgets in the local communities.

Out in the community

Assemblywoman Buttenschon puts her constituents and their concerns first. Over the last year, Assemblywoman Buttenschon's office helped resolve hundreds of requests from constituents.

Assemblywoman Buttenschon understands that people lead busy lives and may not be able to make it to her regular Utica office hours. That's why her office hosted monthly office hours in Rome and Frankfort, where a representative was available to help individuals and listen to their ideas and concerns. Assemblywoman Buttenschon also held 139 district meetings, as well as 100 meetings in Albany and seven town halls to discuss her ongoing work and hear about what issues still need to be addressed.

Investing in the Mohawk Valley

Assemblywoman Buttenschon helped secure significant funding for the Mohawk Valley this year, including:

- More than \$200 million in Foundation Aid and more than \$400,000 in additional aid for local school districts;
- \$50,000 for the Rescue Mission of Utica to continue its support of individuals battling drug addiction as they start down the road to recovery;
- \$10,000 for the Oneida County Fire Chiefs Association for leadership training;
- \$10,000 for the Oneida County Office for the Aging to support senior programs;
- \$10,000 for the Oneida County Youth Bureau to support after-school and summer programs;
- \$5,000 for Cornell Cooperative Extension for programs to support and promote farming, such as Farm Fest;
- \$5,000 for the Utica Center for Development for its Central New York Veterans Outreach Center program;
- \$5,000 for the town of Frankfort for senior, veteran and youth programs; and
- \$5,000 for the village of New York Mills to support the removal of abandoned property.



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Look inside to see how
**Assemblywoman
Marianne Buttenschon**
is fighting for the
Mohawk Valley

Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon stands with **Mohawk Valley families**



“As your voice in Albany, I’ll never stop fighting for real results that improve our communities and make our future brighter.” — *Marianne Buttenschon*