



Assemblymember Robert Carroll

2019-2020 State Budget Review



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Spring 2019

2019-2020 STATE BUDGET REVIEW



Assemblymember Carroll at the Fair Elections Rally with Citizen Action, Make the Road NY, and the #FairElections Campaign.

On April 1st, the legislature passed a \$175.5 billion state budget. Of the ten different budget bills before the legislature, I voted for nine of the bills and against one.

I voted against the revenue bill because it creates an unconstitutional commission with the power to redraft our election laws. This new commission will subvert the democratic authority and oversight of the legislature. Some support the creation of the commission in the hope it will create a public finance system for our elections. I support public financing of our elections but doubt this will create a credible or worthwhile public financing system. The commission, with broad authority to redraft all of our elections laws, will issue its report on December 1st. If the legislature does not act at that time, the commission's findings will become law twenty-one days later. This is unacceptable and demonstrates the need for real reform and transparency in Albany.

Despite the creation of this ill-conceived commission, there were many positive outcomes from the budget process. I've highlighted some of them below.

Congestion Pricing and Additional MTA Revenue Streams

The MTA is in dire need of additional revenue and reform. Without additional dedicated funding, the MTA will have an operating deficit of \$1.3 billion by 2022. With our buses and subways in need of modernization and the MTA's finances being in such disarray, the legislature needed to find additional revenue for the over 6 million New Yorkers who rely on public transportation every day. Given this necessity, the legislature approved a congestion pricing charge for all vehicles entering the Manhattan central business district, which includes all of Manhattan below 60th Street, excluding the FDR Drive and the West Side Highway. The Triboro Bridge and Tunnel Authority (TBTA) will establish the rate of the toll, which will likely include varied pricing depending on the day and hour. This program, expected to go into effect by December 2021, is estimated to provide in excess of \$1 billion of revenue for MTA capital projects.

As a lifelong Brooklynite, I certainly don't like paying for something that was once free, but I think congestion pricing is the responsible plan, and in the end, will make it easier to travel by public transportation or by car in our city, leave our air cleaner, and make our streets more livable.

In addition to the congestion pricing plan, the legislature approved multiple additional funding streams for the MTA. There is an increase of .25% on the real estate transfer tax on commercial sales above \$2 million and residential sales above \$3 million. We increased the mansion tax by creating new tiers, starting with homes above \$2 million at 1.25% and increasing to 3.9% for homes above \$25 million. Additionally, third-party retail sites will be required to charge NY sales tax when a buyer in New York purchases something from an online retailer. Together, these new revenue streams are projected to add an additional \$685 million to the MTA's annual budget.

Plastic Bag Ban

After years of advocacy, the legislature has at long last approved meaningful restrictions on plastic bag use. On January 1, 2020, single use plastic bags will be banned throughout the state. Counties will be given the option to impose a 5-cent fee on paper bags. If they choose to opt-in, 40% of the funds raised will help cities and counties purchase and distribute reusable bags, emphasizing low and fixed-income communities. The remaining 60% will go towards environmental protection.

Criminal Justice Reform

Through the budget process, the legislature eliminated cash bail for most misdemeanors and certain non-violent felonies. Wealth should not be a determining factor for those accused but not convicted of a crime while awaiting trial. Also enacted were changes to the speedy trial provision law and to the early discovery process requiring early scheduled disclosures to defendants.

Education

This year's budget includes \$27.86 billion in general support for public schools, a \$1 billion increase over the 2018-2019 school year, and a total of \$18.4 billion in Foundation Aid. The increase of \$622 million in Foundation Aid support (the main funding source for classroom support) however was less than half the amount initially requested by the Assembly. I will continue to fight on behalf of our students to fully fund Foundation Aid and provide more support for our classrooms.



Assemblymember Carroll speaks with students at PS 10.

2019-2020 STATE BUDGET REVIEW *(continued)*

Clean Water

New clean water protections were included in the 2019-20 state budget.

- \$300 million for the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) to preserve our natural resources.
- \$23 million in clean energy tax credits to encourage the use of clean and alternative energy.
- An increase to the state's historic investment in clean water to \$3 billion. This will address emerging contaminants, replace lead drinking water service lines, and repair aging water mains and sewer lines.
- Lowering the threshold for elevated blood lead levels to protect children from lead poisoning.



Assemblymember Carroll speaking at a rally to stop the Williams Pipeline. Assemblymember Carroll is leading the effort in the Assembly to halt the pipeline and to invest in renewable energy.

Funding for Early Voting

Early this year, the legislature passed a series of election reform bills that included early voting. As a strong advocate of early voting, I knew that simply codifying the right to vote early in New York was not enough. We needed to fund both the equipment and administration of an early voting system. To this end, I was the lead author and advocate in the Assembly demanding we fully fund the equipment and operations necessary to administer early voting in New York. As a result, the budget includes \$10 million for early voting and \$14.7 million to carry out a number of related reforms passed earlier this year. The funding will be used for counties to purchase electronic poll books, provide uniform polling hours for primary elections across the state, and to enact the Voter Enfranchisement Modernization Act which establishes an online voter registration system.

Protecting Grassroots Advocacy

On behalf of almost 100 grassroots groups from across the state, I led the effort in the Assembly to oppose the Governor's misguided attempts to lower the lobbying reporting threshold from \$5,000 to \$500. This change would have had a chilling effect on ordinary citizens' attempts to lobby their legislators. New York should be a leader in increasing transparency and reducing the influence of money in our political system, but discouraging grassroots groups and everyday citizens from organizing and lobbying their elected officials would effectively have the opposite effect. Fortunately this provision was removed from the budget.

Legislative Accomplishments This Session

Prior to the budget, the legislature got off to a fast start and passed a host of important legislation.

Women's Reproductive Health Legislation

The Reproductive Health Act

A.21 updates New York State law to address constitutional flaws and recognizes a woman's fundamental right to access safe, legal abortion. The bill authorizes duly licensed health care practitioners to terminate a pregnancy within twenty-four weeks and when there is an absence of fetal viability, or when a woman's life or health is endangered. The bill moves abortion from the Penal Law to the Public Health Law and removes longstanding harmful and burdensome barriers to accessing reproductive healthcare. This will protect New Yorkers from any potential federal intrusion.

The Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act

A.585A codifies in New York State Insurance Law the requirement under the federal Affordable Care Act that all health insurers provide cost-free contraceptive coverage as a part of their insurance policies. Insurance companies must now provide cost-free coverage for at least one type of all FDA-approved contraceptives, including emergency contraception. The law also applies to voluntary sterilization procedures, extending coverage to both men and women, and provides contraceptive education, counseling and related follow up services.

GENDA

I was proud to join the Governor and a number of my colleagues for the historic signing of the **Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA)** – **A.747**, which will protect the rights of transgender and gender-nonconforming New Yorkers and make gender identity and expression one of the state's protected classes so that no one can be denied essentials like housing, health care, education, and employment solely because of who they are.

Electoral Reform Package

As a member of the Election Law committee and former election lawyer, I was proud to stand with my colleagues this session to reform our election process. The package of reforms includes:

Early Voting

A.780 establishes a nine-day early voting period, including two full weekends, for voters to vote in person prior to any primary, special or general election day, and mandate at least seven early voting sites for Brooklyn. This measure will be in place for the 2019 General Election.

Same Day Registration

A.777 (Carroll) would allow for voters to register to vote on election day. This will ensure that no eligible voter is denied access to the polls because of an arbitrary time restraint. This is a constitutional amendment and will need to be passed again in 2021 when the next legislature is sworn in and then placed on the ballot for New Yorkers to vote on as early as the November 2021 election. As the Prime Sponsor of this legislation, I believe strongly in lowering the barriers to vote. By allowing same day registration, we make sure all eligible voters can participate on election day.

Closing the Limited Liability Corporation (LLC) Loophole

A.776 restricts LLC campaign contributions to the same \$5,000 aggregate contribution limit that exists for corporations. The law also requires the disclosure of all direct and indirect owners of LLC's and that all contributions by an LLC be attributed to each member in proportion to each member's ownership interests. Previously, a single individual was allowed to make multiple large contributions to the same candidate or committee through separate LLCs, making it difficult to determine who made the contributions and possible to evade individual contribution limits.

No Excuse Absentee Voting

A.778 Under current law, absentee voting is only allowed if an individual expects to be absent on election day, or is unable to get to the polls because of physical illness or disability. This constitutional

Legislative Accomplishments This Session



Assemblymember Carroll questioning the NYC Campaign Finance Board at the State Senate Elections Committee Hearing on Public Financing of Elections. Also pictured are Senator Myrie and Assemblymember Epstein.

amendment would expand accessibility to the polls by allowing any voter the right to request an absentee ballot no matter the reason. Like same day registration, no excuse absentee voting is a constitutional amendment and will need to be passed again in 2021 when the next legislature is sworn in and then placed on the ballot for New Yorkers to vote on as early as the November 2021 election.

Consolidating State and Federal Primaries

A.779 The combined federal and state primary will now be held in June. No longer will New York be the only state in the union to hold primaries for state and federal elections on different dates. The combined primary should increase voter turnout, reduce costs, and make our election calendar more predictable.

DREAM Act

The Jose Peralta New York State DREAM Act

A.782 eliminates financial obstacles to obtaining state financial aid for undocumented students in New York seeking to attend an institution of higher education. These students are now eligible for general awards, performance-based awards, or New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) funds if they:

- Attended an approved NYS high school for two or more years, graduated from an approved NYS high school and applied for attendance to a NYS college or university within five years of receiving their NYS high school diploma; or
- Attended an approved NYS program for a state high school equivalency diploma, received their state high school equivalency diploma, and applied for attendance to a NYS college or university within five years of receiving their state high school equivalency diploma; or
- Are otherwise eligible for in-state tuition at SUNY, CUNY, or community colleges as prescribed by their admission criteria.

The legislation will also help immigrant families prepare for the costs

of higher education by allowing an individual with a taxpayer identification number to open a New York State 529 family tuition account under the New York State College Savings Program.

School Zone Speed Camera Legislation

A.6645 will expand the use of speed cameras to 750 school zones in New York City. The cameras will operate Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., and the city will be required to install signs giving notice that a speed camera is in use. This important legislation will make our streets safer around of our elementary schools, and will protect some of our most vulnerable New Yorkers – our kids.

Child Victims Act

A.2683 has long been championed by the Assembly, and was finally passed into law. It will help survivors of childhood sexual abuse bring civil claims regardless of when the abuse occurred by creating a 1-year look back window to bring claims. It also provides an additional five years to seek criminal charges against perpetrators by changing when the statute of limitations clock begins to run. The statute of limitations now starts when victim reaches the age of 23, where previously it began at 18.

Gun Safety Legislation

The legislature passed a number of gun control measures including comprehensive background checks for gun owners which will keep illegal guns off our streets, and the outlawing of gun modifications such as bump-stocks. The legislature also passed **A.2689**. The Red Flag bill would allow a court to issue an extreme risk protection order (ERPO), prohibiting a person who is determined to be a threat to him or herself or others from purchasing or possessing a firearm for up to one year.

First LGBTQ Group Marches in Brooklyn St. Patrick's Day Parade



Assemblymember Carroll with the founders of the Brooklyn Irish LGBTQ Organization. (Left to right: Gaby Cryan, Matt McMorro, Michael Mallon, Jared Arader, Brian Kenny, Assemblymember Carroll, Lisa Fane, Maggie Lally, and Charlie.)

In January, the Brooklyn Irish LGBTQ Organization (BILO) co-founders Lisa Fane and Matthew McMorro sent a letter to the Brooklyn Irish-American Parade Committee to request permission to march. My office followed up with a letter in support of their request. Subsequently, Lisa, Matt, and I met with parade committee leadership and BILO's petition to march was accepted, making it the first openly LGBTQ organization to march in the parade's history. It was truly a special day.

My grandfather founded this parade in 1976 to commemorate the American bicentennial, to celebrate the Irish, and the contributions of Irish Americans to our country. Were he still living, I know that he would be proud that the parade is now welcoming to all.

Assemblymember Robert Carroll – Around the District



Standing against hate with elected officials and leaders of all faiths in response to the mosque shootings in New Zealand.



Assemblymember Carroll at his Budget Town Hall at PS 139.



Honoring Bernadette Buckley Kash, the Grand Marshall of the 2019 Brooklyn Saint Patrick's Day Parade (with Anne Dolan, left).



Visiting the Senior League of Flatbush.

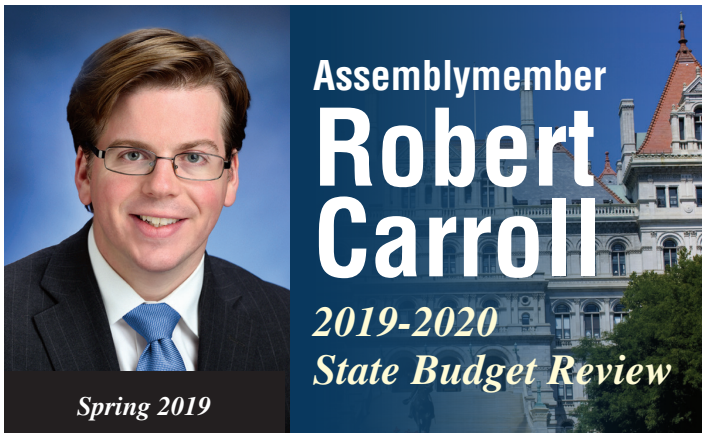


Assemblymember Carroll with the PS 154 Debate Club.



Assemblymember Carroll honoring the Pakistani America Youth Organization for their efforts to co-name the corner of Coney Island Avenue and Foster Avenue "Muhammad Ali Jinnah Way."

New York State Assembly, Albany, New York 12248



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**Brooklyn Answer
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**Sunday, May 19
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E. 8th streets**

**Assemblymember Robert Carroll
Hosts His Annual Brooklyn Answer Fair!**

Get real-time, in-person answers and information from dozens of city and state agencies, utilities and city-wide and neighborhood services and resources! Also – **FREE Rain Barrels**, **FREE document shredding**, and other helpful giveaways and opportunities! Engage with representatives from the Department of Transportation, Environmental Protection, Parks and Forestry, Finance, Sanitation, Buildings, MTA, Brooklyn Solarworks, Fire, Police, ConEd, National Grid, AICF mammogram bus, and many MORE.

**RSVP to District Office 718 788 7221 or
email carrollr@nyassembly.gov to reserve rain barrels.**