



Assemblyman  
**Charles D. Fall**  
Assembly District 61

**Weekly Report from Assemblyman Charles D. Fall**  
**April 1, 2021**

**District 61 News**

**Accessing COVID-19 Relief for Houses of Worship & Schools**

This week, I joined U.S. Senate Majority Leader, Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) for a virtual meeting with faith-based leaders and advocates to discuss access of federal aid to houses of worship and schools. Through the efforts of Senator Schumer, New York State is projected to receive approximately \$24 billion in federal aid to assist in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. I want to thank Majority Leader Schumer for co-hosting this informative event, Imam Tahir Kukqi and Bishop Victor Brown for the opening and closing prayers and extend out a special appreciation for the faith-based leaders and advocates that participated and assist our communities daily. I remain committed to assisting and advocating for the residents of the 61<sup>st</sup> Assembly District.



## Vigil to Honor Lives Lost to Anti-Asian Violence

This Tuesday, Staten Island Asian Community leaders came together and organized a vigil to honor all the lives lost to Anti-Asian violence as well as a call to action to end these hate crimes. I stand with them in condemning these heinous acts against our Asian brothers and sisters. And condemn the rise of hate crimes on Staten Island. We must come together and put a stop to this violence. As I always say hate against one group is hate towards all groups. [Click here](#) to read my full statement regarding the spike of hate crimes on Staten Island.



## Updates From Albany

**This week the Assembly and Senate passed the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act to legalize adult use of marijuana in New York State. The Legislation was signed into law as Chapter. 92.**

The passage of the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA), 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 will use revenue from adult-use marijuana to invest in education and communities that have been disproportionately targeted by state and federal drug laws. New York will join 14 states, two territories and the District of Columbia in legalizing the adult use of marijuana. Highlights of the legislation:

### **Restorative Justice**

- The MRTA will ease the burden of New Yorkers, particularly people of color who have been disproportionately impacted by drug laws.
- The legislation includes provisions that will allow individuals who are currently incarcerated or living with a criminal record for certain marijuana offenses to petition for dismissal or resentencing on the conviction.
- The legislation also builds on the [2019 decriminalization law](#) by providing for the expungement of conviction records for individuals convicted of criminal possession of marijuana in the fourth degree, criminal possession of marijuana in the third degree, criminal sale of marijuana in the fifth degree, and criminal sale of marijuana in the fourth degree.
- Much of the revenue from the legalization of adult-use marijuana will go to the Community Grants Reinvestment Fund, which will be administered by the OCM advisory board and allocated to community based nonprofits to reinvest in communities disproportionately impacted by state and

federal drug laws, as well as providing substance use disorder services, mental health services, services to address adverse childhood experiences, and afterschool and child care services.

- It will also support education through the State Lottery Fund and the Drug Treatment and Public Education Fund, which would require the Department of Health (DOH) and Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) to establish substance use disorder treatment programs for youth and adults.
- The legislation prohibits employers from taking adverse action against employees for the use of cannabis outside of work hours, off the employer's premises and without the use of the employer's equipment or other property.
- It also includes protections and procedures for adult-use cannabis as it relates to child protective investigations and reports, as well as custody and visitation rights in line with how alcohol is currently treated in law.
- Finally, it removes the ability to file a petition for a person in need of supervision (PINS) based solely on certain levels of marijuana possession.

## Job Creation

- A report by Whitney Economics found that in 2020 alone – during a pandemic that caused millions of Americans to lose their jobs – the cannabis industry created 77,000 jobs.
- Across the country, there are about 321,000 jobs in the legal marijuana industry. Legalizing marijuana will create jobs across traditional industries, including agriculture, distribution, delivery, retail and more.
- The legislation establishes adult-use license categories: cultivator, processor, distributor, retail medical cannabis registered organizations (RO) vertical, RO cultivator, microbusiness, on-site consumption, cooperative, delivery and nursery. Microbusinesses are authorized to have complete vertical integration, which includes producing, processing, distributing and retail. An adult-use cultivator would be able to obtain one processor, one distributor and one nursery license.
- RO would be allowed to, after paying a one-time special fee, apply for a vertically integrated adult-use RO cultivator/processor/distributor/retail license, limited to no more than three co-located dispensaries.
- The Cannabis Control Board, with the assistance of the chief equity officer and advisory board, will also be required to establish a social equity plan. The goal of this plan will be to issue 50 percent of licenses to social equity applicants, especially those impacted by the war on drugs, those who are low-income, those who have a marijuana-related conviction, as well as minority and women owned businesses (MWBEs), distressed farmers and service disabled veterans.

## Penalties

- Unlawful possession of cannabis would be defined as a person possessing, outside of one's residence, more than three ounces of cannabis or 24 grams of concentrate, and punishable by a fine of up to \$125.
- Possession by a person less than 21 years of age would be treated similarly to alcohol use– a \$50 civil penalty payable to the OCM and such person would be provided with information on the dangers of the underage use of cannabis and information related to cannabis use disorder.
- The bill also establishes additional possession crimes, with penalties ranging from a class A misdemeanor to a class D felony.
- Cannabis will be included in the Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) law and driving while impaired by cannabis will be considered a misdemeanor.

- If the motorist under arrest refuses such a chemical test, that refusal – as under current law – can result in revocation of the driver’s license for one year.
- It establishes an unlawful sale crime when a person unlawfully sells cannabis or concentrated cannabis, punishable by a \$250 fine.
- Establishes additional criminal sale crimes, with penalties ranging from a class A misdemeanor to a class C felony.

## Opt-Outs

- Cities, towns and villages would be allowed to pass local legislation prohibiting certain retail establishments from opening within their borders, but the MRTA includes provisions for voters to overturn the opt-out.
- While they can opt-out of retail licenses, they cannot opt-out of other types of licenses. These opt-outs would also not prohibit the adult use of cannabis. Cities, towns and villages may also reasonably regulate the time, place and manner of operation of retail establishments.

## Taxation

- Tax revenue from states that have legalized adult-use cannabis has surpassed expectations. Colorado usually collects more than \$20 million a month, and California collects more than \$50 million a month.
- In fiscal year 2019, Washington State collected a total of \$395.5 million in legal marijuana income and licensing fees.
- It is projected that New York State will receive \$350 million annually, once the law goes into full effect 18 months from now.

I want to first thank the sponsor of this legislation, Assembly Majority Leader, Crystal Peoples-Stokes for her dedicated eight years of work on this legislation. I realize that there are concerns about legalizing adult-use but I co-sponsored and voted for this legislation because of restorative justice, job creation, the enhancing of public, school, roadside safety and much needed revenue to disproportionate economic communities.



## **Critical Updates, New Policies, and Testing Locations to Protect You and Your Community**

1. **This past week it was announced a new expansion of COVID-19 vaccine eligibility in New York.** Beginning Tuesday, March 30 at 8 a.m., all New Yorkers 30 years of age and older will be eligible to receive the vaccine. Beginning April 6, universal eligibility goes into effect and all New Yorkers 16 years of age and older will be eligible to receive the vaccine
2. **Legislation to legalize adult-use cannabis has been passed.** The bill would establish the Office of Cannabis Management to implement a comprehensive regulatory framework that would cover medical, adult-use and cannabinoid hemp. The bill would also expand New York State's existing medical marijuana and cannabinoid hemp programs. The legislation provides licensing for marijuana producers, distributors, retailers, and other actors in the cannabis market, and creates a social and economic equity program to assist individuals disproportionately impacted by cannabis enforcement that want to participate in the industry.
3. **Today the HALT Solitary Confinement Act (S.2836/A2277-A) was signed into law, reforming the practice of segregated confinement in New York State correctional facilities.** This legislation limits the amount of time an incarcerated person can spend in segregated confinement to 15 days, clearly defines and reduces the number of disciplinary infractions eligible for segregated confinement, and exempts certain vulnerable populations, including the young, elderly, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and individuals with a serious mental illness.
4. **New York's Major League Baseball teams, the New York Mets and New York Yankees, can resume play with spectators in the stadiums, beginning April 1.** Professional sports in large outdoor stadiums that hold 10,000 people or more will be allowed to reopen at 20% capacity.
5. **Beginning April 2, arts and entertainment venues can reopen at 33% capacity, up to 100 people indoors and up to 200 people outdoors.** If all attendees present proof of negative test prior to entry, capacity can increase up to 150 people indoors and up to 500 people outdoors. Social distancing and face coverings will be required by all attendees, as well as strict adherence to all applicable Department of Health guidance.
6. **New York State is launching a new pilot program to begin administering the Johnson & Johnson's single-dose vaccine to eligible New Yorkers during the overnight hours at Yankee Stadium, Javits Center and New York State Fair Mass Vaccination Sites.** Following a discussion with the White House COVID-19 Task Force, New York is taking measures to distribute the state's allocation of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine as quickly as possible, as states have been informed there will be a lag in the following week's allocation. As part of this effort, thousands of new appointments will be made available at each of the three sites in the coming days. Counties, pharmacies, and Federally Qualified Health Centers will also be receiving Johnson & Johnson allocations this week.
7. Eligible individuals can schedule vaccine appointments by contacting:
  - - **The NYC Vaccine hotline at [877-829-4692](tel:877-829-4692) or clicking here**
    - **The NYS hotline at [888-364-3065](tel:888-364-3065) or clicking here**
    - **SOMOS, a community health provider at [833-766-6769](tel:833-766-6769)**
    - **Eligible individuals will have to fill out a screening form and attest to being in an eligible category.** Anyone who is NOT eligible for vaccination, should not sign up for an

- appointment. Click here to find updated vaccine eligibility lists, vaccine locations near you and to schedule a vaccine appointment when eligible.
- Click here for a COVID-19 vaccine fact sheet.
8. Veterans enrolled in the VA Care system can call and schedule an appointment to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Call [1-877-877-9267](tel:1-877-877-9267). If you are not yet eligible call [877-222-8387](tel:877-222-8387) to enroll.

# Attention NYC Veterans

VA New York Harbor Healthcare System is working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other federal partners to provide COVID-19 vaccines to Veterans and VA health care personnel.

At this time, VA New York Harbor is offering the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine to **Veterans 65 years of age and older currently enrolled in VA Healthcare.**

The vaccine is being administered at the following locations [by appointment only:](#)

- *Manhattan VA Medical Center*
- *Brooklyn VA Medical Center*
- *St. Albans Community Living Center*
- *Staten Island Community VA Clinic*

Eligible Veterans must schedule an appointment by calling  
**1-877-877-9267**

Veterans who are not yet enrolled in VA Healthcare may visit [www.va.gov-health-care/how-to-apply/](http://www.va.gov-health-care/how-to-apply/) or call 877-222-8387 for more information on how to apply.

**VA**



**U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs**

**9. Review the State guidelines for travelers arriving in New York State.**

- View the Test-and-Trace corps **COVID-19 Wait Times Dashboard** for estimated wait times for NYC Health + Hospitals COVID-19 testing locations. This wait time information is updated by site staff every two hours.
  - **Use the DOH map to find all State-run testing sites.**
  - **Click here for a full list of NYC Health + Hospitals walk-in testing sites available at no cost to you on the North Shore.**
  - Use the Phone-a-Clinician program with Health + Hospitals, by calling (844) NYC-4NYC. Call to connect with a medical provider free of charge seven days a week from 9 AM - 9 PM.
  - Individuals that are unable to safely isolate at home may be afforded a free temporary hotel room. **Click here to learn more** or call **(844) 692-4692**. **Please click here if you have any further questions.**

---

**Crucial Resources to Support and Aid Your Everyday Needs**

1. The Gifted & Talented (G&T) application for the 2021-22 school year is open now through **April 9th, 2021**. All families with children born in 2016 who live in New York City—including those who have temporarily relocated due to the COVID-19 pandemic—can apply now to enter G&T programs in fall 2021. We welcome your ongoing partnership to ensure that families in your district take advantage of this opportunity. Families can apply online at **MySchools.nyc**, through a **Family Welcome Center**, or over the phone at **718-935-2009**. The online application is available in ten languages, and families can apply over the phone in over 200 languages.
2. SCORE Staten Island is a nonprofit association dedicated to helping both aspiring and established entrepreneurs get off the ground, grow and achieve their goals through cost-free education and confidential mentorship. The organization is Chapter 476 of the nationwide SCORE. As a resource partner with the U.S. Small Business Administration, SCORE is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the SBA. It has both local mentors, who have proved to be successful in their fields, and a network of 10,000 volunteer mentors across the country providing web-based seminars and resources. It can provide:
  - Volunteer mentors who share their expertise across many different industries
  - Free, confidential business mentoring in person, via email, phone or by video
  - Free business tools, templates and tips online
  - Inexpensive or free business workshop/webinars(locally) and webinars (online 24/7)
  - For additional information, or to schedule an appointment, SCORE-Staten Island may be visited here. Or you call them at **718-727-1221**; email at **info@scoresi.org** and visit on Facebook and LinkedIn.

3. Need free tax assistance? **Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation offers a free tax preparation program** that provides NYC residents with assistance filing their returns and maximizing their credits and refunds. Call NAMIC's hotline **Monday – Wednesday** 11am – 7pm and **Saturday and Sunday** 9am – 5pm. Contact Maria Guzman-Colon at [taxhelp@nmic.org](mailto:taxhelp@nmic.org) or [929-415-8745](tel:929-415-8745) with any questions.

**NYC FREE TAX PREP**

**FREE TAX PREPARATION**

January 23 – April 15, 2021

Please be prepared with:

- Photo ID (New York State ID preferred)
- Social Security card
- Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) for all family members
- W-2s for all jobs you held during 2020
- Any other tax-related documents
- Your bank account number and routing number (if you want to direct deposit your refund)

"If you are filing jointly, your spouse must be present with photo ID."

**When?**  
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 11AM - 7PM  
Saturday, Sunday 9AM-5PM

**How do I sign up?**  
Book an appointment online at [www.nmic.org/taxes](http://www.nmic.org/taxes)

**Who is eligible?**  
People who earned less than \$68,000 in 2020

**Additional questions?**  
Contact us at [taxhelp@nmic.org](mailto:taxhelp@nmic.org) or (929) 415-8745

**NMIC**  
In collaboration with:  
**NYC Consumer and Worker Protection** **FREE TAX PREP**

**NYC FREE TAX PREP**

**PREPARACIÓN GRATUITA DE IMPUESTOS**

ENERO 23, - Abril 15, 2021

Por favor esté preparado con:

- Identificación con foto (se prefiere la identificación del estado de Nueva York)
- Tarjeta de identidad social
- Contribuyente individual Número de Identificación (ITIN) para todos los miembros de la familia
- W-2 para todos los trabajos que tuvo durante 2020
- Cualquier otro documento relacionado con impuestos
- Su número de cuenta del banco y número de ruta (si desea su reembolso por depósito directo)

"Si presenta una declaración conjunta, su cónyuge debe estar presente con una identificación con foto."

**¿Cuando?**  
Lunes, Martes y Miércoles de 11 AM a 7 PM  
Sábado, Domingo 9 AM - 5PM

**¿Cómo me registro?**  
Haga una cita en línea en [www.nmic.org/taxes](http://www.nmic.org/taxes)

**¿Quién es elegible?**  
Personas que ganaron menos de \$ 68,000 en 2020.

**¿Preguntas adicionales?**  
Contactenos [taxhelp@nmic.org](mailto:taxhelp@nmic.org) o (929) 415-8745

**NMIC**  
45 Wadsworth Avenue  
New York, NY 10033  
[www.nmic.org](http://www.nmic.org)  
212-822-8300

**In collaboration with:**  
**NYC Consumer and Worker Protection** **FREE TAX PREP**

4. **Staten Island Legal Services wants to help you.** If you need **free legal help** during the Covid-19 crisis, for matters of immigration, foreclosure, small business advice and more. **call them at [718-233-6480](tel:718-233-6480).**

**DO YOU NEED FREE LEGAL HELP DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS?**

Staten Island Legal Services is here to help you and your family get through this together.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Unemployment Benefits &amp; Employment Issues</li> <li>■ Food Stamps (SNAP), Public Assistance, Medicaid</li> <li>■ Eviction/Illlegal Lockouts</li> <li>■ Mortgage Relief &amp; Foreclosure Prevention</li> <li>■ Small Business Advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Immigration</li> <li>■ Bankruptcy and Consumer Help</li> <li>■ Student Loan and Debt Collection</li> <li>■ Domestic Violence, Orders of Protection, &amp; Child Support</li> <li>■ Education</li> <li>■ LGBTQ/HIV+</li> </ul>
---	--

**CALL STATEN ISLAND LEGAL SERVICES**

Monday - Friday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
We speak your language and serve all 5 boroughs of NYC.  
**718-233-6480**

**legalservicesnyc.org**

**FORECLOSURE PREVENTION NETWORK**

Since 2007, Legal Services NYC's Foreclosure Prevention Network has assisted nearly 17,000 New York City homeowners facing foreclosures. With community-based foreclosure prevention projects in our Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island offices, our dedicated team of nearly 40 attorneys and advocates provide critical legal services to homeowners navigating the judicial foreclosure process and fight to help them save their homes. LSNYC Foreclosure Prevention Network partners include non-profit organizations, housing counselors, state service agencies and local government. Our advocates conduct training, outreach and education activities in conjunction with community and government partners.

**WHAT WE DO**

Legal Services NYC's Foreclosure Prevention Network attorneys represent homeowners in foreclosure as well as in state and federal court litigation challenging predatory lending, abusive mortgage servicing, scams targeting vulnerable homeowners, and fair housing and lending violations. We are the largest group of free civil legal services attorneys that help NYC homeowners by:

- Representing homeowners in court-mandated settlement conferences
- Providing legal advice and pro se assistance to homeowners through court-based clinics
- Helping clients negotiate home-saving solutions
- Prosecuting for lender lending rules, and for better enforcement of laws protecting consumers from predatory practices

**CLIENT SUCCESS STORY**

**Ms. M., a 68-year-old Black homeowner, fell one month behind on her mortgage when she had to pay for her sister's funeral expenses.** For one year, her mortgage company continued to accept her late payments. When she fell another month behind, the company refused to accept Ms. M's payments unless she could catch up on the one missed payment. For three years, Ms. M tried to negotiate with her lender, but it refused to work with her even though she had sufficient income and was caring for her husband, who suffered from Alzheimer's disease. After her lender denied her request for a forbearance, Legal Services NYC's attorney helped her negotiate a modification with a lower interest rate and more affordable monthly payment, saving her \$300 per month on her housing expenses and allowing her family to remain in their home.

**CONTACT US**

Homeowners can talk to an LSNYC foreclosure advocate by contacting our citywide access line at 917-661-5500. For more information about our services, you can reach our leadership team, listed below.

**Citywide: Jacob Inwald**  
Citywide Director  
of the Foreclosure Prevention  
[jwald@lscnyc.org](mailto:jwald@lscnyc.org)

**Bronx: Alexis Lorenzo**  
Director, Bronx Foreclosure Prevention Project  
Economic Development Unit  
[alexis@lscnyc.org](mailto:alexis@lscnyc.org)

**Brooklyn: Shabnam Faraki**  
Senior Attorney, Brooklyn Foreclosure Prevention Project  
[shabnam@lscnyc.org](mailto:shabnam@lscnyc.org)

**Queens: Christopher Newton**  
Acting Director, Queens Immigration and Consumer Rights Project  
[christopher@lscnyc.org](mailto:christopher@lscnyc.org)

**Staten Island: Sara Manusagh**  
Director, Staten Island Homeowner Defense Project  
[smanusagh@lscnyc.org](mailto:smanusagh@lscnyc.org)

## 5. Small Business Resources:

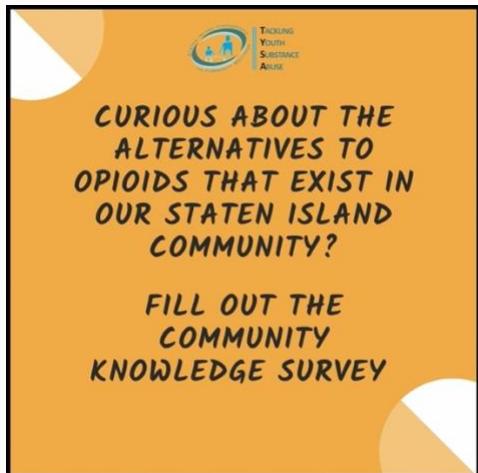
- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) provides loans to help businesses keep their workforce employed during the Coronavirus crisis. The PPP application for all lenders is now open. There are limited funds, so applicants are advised to apply early! [Click here for more information and to find the right application for your business.](#)
  - In preparation for your application, gather your documentation. For a complete list of required documents and additional PPP information, [click here](#).
  - **List of participating lenders:**
    - Lower East Side People's Credit Union- North Shore Branch, for PPP inquiries, email [lending@lesfcu.org](mailto:lending@lesfcu.org) or apply directly online on their [website](#).
    - TruFund, [click here for an application](#) or email Mark Brazier (English) at [MBrazier@trufund.org](mailto:MBrazier@trufund.org) or Marcos Reyes (Spanish) at [mreyes@trufund.org](mailto:mreyes@trufund.org).

## Useful Events and Opportunities

1. Uncle Chase Foundation presents their annual Golden Easter Egg Hunt **April 3 from 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM**. Located in Mariners Harbor at Grandview Park.



2. **The 15th Annual Harambee celebration - honoring community leaders who have distinguished themselves through their service to the community.** The virtual celebration will take place at 7:00pm on [Thursday, April 29th](#). Ticket costs start at \$25 and can be purchased [here](#).
3. As part of the CADCA non-opioid choices project, **Tackling Youth Substance Abuse is surveying community members about their thoughts and knowledge on the availability of alternatives to opioids in the community.** There are no wrong answers. The survey is short and can only be completed electronically. [Click here to fill out the survey.](#)



4. Register to join this free session and learn all there is to know about connecting and navigating through LinkedIn with an hour presentation done by expert Brian Cope. [Click here to register.](#)



MTN ORGANIZATION INC.

## LINKEDIN SEMINAR

Learn how to connect and navigate  
using simple tools and tricks

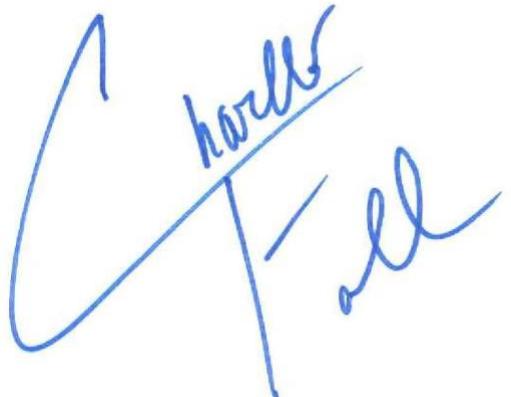
SATURDAY, APRIL 3RD 2021

1:00PM

REGISTER ONLINE AT

5. **Citizens Committee for New York City is offering grants of up to \$10,000 to grassroot organizations responding to the immediate needs of struggling New Yorkers to open food pantries, distribute surgical masks, arrange elderly check-ins, or design other projects to meet their neighborhoods' urgent needs amid the COVID-19 crisis.** Applications are open and there is a rolling deadline. [Click here to learn more.](#)
6. **During these difficult times, the Northfield Bank Foundation is offering a grant opportunity for COVID-19 emergency related requests for health and wellness and feeding the hungry initiatives.** The mission of the Northfield Bank Foundation is to promote charitable purposes within the communities in which Northfield Bank operates - Staten Island, Brooklyn and Central New Jersey. [Click here to learn more about the grant process.](#)
7. **Richmond County Savings Foundation** - Nonprofit organizations may request funding for program or project support, journal ad or event sponsorship. Grant requests are reviewed throughout the year for amounts up to \$5,000. [See! here for more information.](#)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles D. Fall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Charles" on top and "D. Fall" below it.

Charles D. Fall  
Member of Assembly

**ALBANY OFFICE:** Room 534, Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY [12248.518-455-4677](tel:12248.518-455-4677), FAX [518-455-5946](tel:518-455-5946)

**DISTRICT OFFICE:** 853 Forest Avenue, Staten Island, New York [10310.718-442-9932](tel:10310.718-442-9932), FAX [718-442-9942](tel:718-442-9942)