



Dear Friends,

The legislative session is in full swing! We are back in Albany this year, albeit with strict safety protocols, and I could not be more pleased.

**The budget season was launched last week with Governor Hochul's proposed \$218 billion Executive Budget.** The Assembly has scheduled [joint budget hearings](#) with the State Senate, which will lead up to the creation of a "One House" budget representing the collective views of both chambers. I am heartened that the Governor's budget provides a very good starting point, including:

- **\$31.3 billion in school aid**, which represents the highest level ever provided and follows through on the commitment to fully fund Foundation Aid. There is also increased funding for our state higher education institutions.
- **Tax relief with an acceleration of the middle-class tax cut**, which first began in 2018 and had been scheduled for completion in 2025. This accelerates the cuts so that they are completed in 2023, providing reduced rates to 6.1 million New Yorkers. Also included are tax credits for small businesses (including for those hit by COVID) and a homeowner tax rebate credit.
- An increase from \$3 billion to \$4 billion for the **Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Bond Act**, a \$500 million **investment in offshore wind**, and significant **new funding for the Environmental Protection Fund**.
- As a member of the Assembly Housing Committee, together with my colleagues, I advocated that the Governor launch a new Five-Year Capital Plan for affordable housing. The budget includes such a plan, with **\$26 billion toward the creation of 100,000 new affordable housing units, including 10,000 with support services for vulnerable populations**.
- As a member of the Committee on People with Disabilities, I was pleased to see a **43% funding increase for the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)**, which will enable the agency to carry out its mission much more effectively.
- **Substantial funding increases for the NYS Department of Transportation, and to municipalities for their local roads.**
- **Increased resources to help local law enforcement combat gun violence.**
- **Increased health care funding**, including funding for health care and mental hygiene worker retention bonuses.

The Westchester delegation will be holding a virtual public forum on the budget next **Thursday, February 3, from 10 am-2 pm**. If you would like to give testimony during the hearing, please [click here](#) to register. If you cannot attend but would like to give written testimony, please email your testimony to Lisa Urban at [urbanl@nyassembly.gov](mailto:urbanl@nyassembly.gov) by 5 pm on Tuesday, February 1.

If you would like to watch the hearing, the live stream will be available on my [Facebook page](#).



**Thursday,  
February 3, 2022**

**10:00 AM – 2:00 PM  
Via Zoom**

**SUBJECT**

Virtual budget forum for local organizations, elected officials, residents, and communities of Westchester County to share their views on the Governor's Executive Budget for SFY 2022-2023

**Testimony welcome at our annual budget forum:**

- Please register in advance at <https://forms.gle/QBhcqRnj5yLpHvMSA> to receive a time slot.
- Zoom link to be sent the day prior to the forum.
- Please submit written testimony to Lisa Urban at [urbanl@nyassembly.gov](mailto:urbanl@nyassembly.gov) **by 5:00 pm Tuesday, February 1, 2022.**
- Oral testimony limited to 3 minutes.
- If you cannot testify on February 3rd written testimony is welcome.
- Event will be live streamed on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/SteveOtis91>.

The Westchester Delegation will accommodate as many participants as possible.  
Any questions please call Assemblyman Otis's office at 914-939-7028.

In other news, **last week my colleagues and I – along with the disability advocacy community – held a (mostly virtual) launch, introducing a [package of bills](#) to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities.** You can view my opening remarks by clicking below:



(For additional information about the legislative package, [please click here](#). The full launch can be [viewed here](#).)

Thank you to Wini Schiff of the [InterAgency Council of Developmental Disabilities Agencies, Inc. \(IAC\)](#) and all the advocates involved in the launch. Thank you also to Assemblyman Tom Abinanti, Assemblymember Harvey Epstein, Senator John Mannion, and all my other colleagues who participated.

Now let's get to work!

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## **Free Rapid COVID-19 Tests Available**

**Four FREE at-home rapid antigen COVID-19 tests are now available from the federal government.** Limit of one set (of four) per household. Orders will usually ship in 7-12 days, and shipping is free via the U.S. Postal Service. If you haven't yet done so, go to [COVIDtests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov) for more information and to order your test kit!



COVIDTESTS.GOV

**COVIDtests.gov - Free at-home COVID-19 tests**



Additionally, **insurance companies and group health plans must now cover the cost of eight over-the-counter at-home COVID-19 tests per person each month.** Getting tested when necessary is crucial to protect yourself and others. [Click here](#) for more info.



On a related note, recently my office was able to distribute at-home COVID-19 tests and KN95 masks to organizations that desperately needed them. We delivered them to Lifting Up Westchester, Hope's Door, the YWCA White Plains & Central Westchester, the Thomas H. Slater Community Center, and the Mount Kisco Child Care Center, and we joined with State Senator Shelley Mayer's office in delivering them to The LOFT LGBT Community Center, the Community Center of Northern Westchester, and Westchester Jewish Community Services.

These are all organizations that help the people of our district with food, services, child care, and housing. **We are grateful to them all and are glad that we were able to aid them in their work for the community.**



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## **Property Tax Circuit Breaker Takes Effect**

You may recall that [last year](#) I reported that the budget adopted for 2021-22 included a property tax circuit breaker program. It has now gone into effect. **The new property tax circuit breaker program will help save middle class taxpayers more than \$400 million dollars.** To qualify for this new program, which will save homeowners up to \$350 per year, an individual must have resided at their current address for at least six months, earn less than \$250,000, be enrolled in or qualify for the STAR program, and spend more than 6% of their income on property taxes. The credit will be available when you file your 2021 taxes.

For more information, or if you have any questions, please contact the [NYS Department of Taxation and Finance](#) or your tax professional.

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## **Reminder! NYS Homeowner Assistance Fund Now Accepting Applications**

Are you a homeowner struggling due to the financial hardship caused by the pandemic? **A reminder that homeowners who are at risk of default, foreclosure, or displacement, including those living in condos and co-ops, [can now apply](#) for essential financial relief.** The NYS Homeowners Assistance Fund (NYS HAF) offers a wide range of services for eligible homeowners, such as financial support to address missed housing-related payments.

**IMPORTANT:** Applications will be processed in the order in which they are received. **As the program is expected to receive significantly more applications than can be funded by the program, I would encourage you [to apply](#) as soon as possible.**

To apply or learn more, visit [nyhomeownerfund.org](https://nyhomeownerfund.org) or call 1-844-77-NYHAF (776-9423). You can also watch a [recent virtual forum](#) on the subject, hosted by members of Westchester's NYS Senate delegation.



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## [Pandemic-Related Accommodations - Recent Updates](#)

The legislature recently passed, and the governor signed, two pandemic-related accommodations that will allow citizens to feel they can safely vote and participate in local government meetings.

- **Absentee voting due to COVID-19 will be allowed through 2022.** The previous legislation that allowed for this expired in December. With the passage of this [new legislation](#), anyone who is concerned about voting in-person due to the risk caused by COVID can vote absentee under the temporary illness exception. [Click here](#) to learn more about voting absentee.
- **[Legislation](#) that extends the ability of county and local governments to conduct meetings in whole or in part virtually during the COVID-19 state disaster emergency.** You can click on the image below to hear the remarks I made following the passage of this legislation.



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## [New York's Efforts to Battle the Climate Crisis](#)

As many of you know, environmental issues – and particularly the climate crisis – have always been of great concern to me. I could not be more pleased to serve on the Assembly Committee on Environmental Protection and will continue to keep you apprised of the committee's progress.

That said, New York is making real strides in its efforts to battle the climate crisis, and with Governor Hochul and her administration fully committed to this fight, I am feeling very optimistic. **Please click on the image below to watch the brief video update I shared earlier this week, discussing those efforts.**



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## [Call for Interns!](#)

**We are seeking dedicated and proactive interns for our district office**, to provide assistance (under direct supervision) with administrative projects and legislative research. Our district office is located in Mount Kisco.

Currently, we have staff AND interns in the office, but we also have staff and interns working entirely remotely, although in-office interns are preferable. We practice social distancing and wear masks in the office, and keep limited the number of people in the office at one time. The hours are flexible, especially for remote work.

Our office has a small staff, so other tasks and duties may arise in addition to the ones listed below.

### Main Responsibilities

*In the office:* Data entry, email organization, answering phones, research, making phone calls, and assorted other office duties and tasks

*Remotely:* Research (on bills, issues, the district, etc.), making phone calls

Please note that this internship is unpaid; however, if an intern's school will allow for school credit, we are happy to work with them to obtain it. **Please send resumes and cover letters to my Chief of Staff, Heather Lackey, at [Lackeyh@nyassembly.gov](mailto:Lackeyh@nyassembly.gov) or call her at 914-244-4450 with any questions.**

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As always, if there are any issues that you would like to see covered in a future newsletter, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at [burdickc@nyassembly.gov](mailto:burdickc@nyassembly.gov) (or simply reply to this email). **Please also follow me on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) for the most up-to-date information.**

Miss any of our previous newsletters? You can [find them here](#).

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Burdick". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

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