

NEWS from Assemblymember Jonathan Jacobson



Summer 2020

Legislative Update from Albany

Dear Neighbor,

For most of us, this past year has been anything but normal. In these tough times when many New Yorkers are struggling, I'm committed to ensuring your voice is heard loud and clear in Albany. I'll continue fighting to protect our families and address critical issues in our communities as we navigate these unprecedented times together.

It's a great privilege to be able to serve as your representative in the Assembly, and I want to assure you that I don't take this role lightly.

I championed several reforms in the 2020 legislative session, including measures that will grant expanded annual sick leave for all New Yorkers, provide financial relief for homeowners, bolster tenant protections and enhance transparency and accountability in law enforcement.



On February 20, Assemblymember Jacobson spoke out against the Governor's proposal to merge the New York State Bridge Authority into the Thruway Authority at a press conference.

I also secured several local victories, including leading the effort to prevent the Governor's proposal to merge the State Bridge Authority into the Thruway Authority. Stopping the proposed merger means that funds generated from the Bridge Authority bridges here in the Hudson Valley will only be spent on the bridges of the Bridge Authority.

As always, I'm here to help. If you want to discuss any issues or need help resolving a problem, my door is always open.

Let's all keep wearing our masks and practice social distancing. Stay safe.

Very truly yours,

Protecting Nursing Homes

I was one of the first legislators to protest nursing homes taking in infected patients, writing to the Commissioner of the State Health Department. This policy was later reversed.

When the Governor required the testing of nursing home workers but omitted the testing of residents, I called for the **testing of all residents monthly** to ensure their individual and the facility's safety. We must **protect vulnerable New Yorkers**, which can only be achieved with regular testing. I introduced legislation to make sure that the testing occurs.

Staying Safe at Home

The ongoing public health crisis has clearly demonstrated that we must ensure workers can take paid time off when they feel sick without fear of retaliation. That's why I helped pass measures to **expand annual sick leave** for all workers as part of the 2020-21 state budget.

Individuals who work for businesses with four or fewer employees will receive up to 40 hours of unpaid sick leave per calendar year. Medium-sized companies must provide employees with 40 hours of paid sick leave annually. Anyone working for a business with more than 100 employees will receive up to 56 hours of paid sick leave.

Further, COVID-19 has forced many of us to work from home in order to protect ourselves and others from contracting the virus, exacerbating the importance of ensuring everyone feels safe in their home. Victims of domestic violence should especially feel safe inside their homes, and the **Safe Homes and Families Act** helps give that peace of mind. The enacted legislation allows an officer responding to a report of domestic violence to temporarily take custody of a firearm or long gun that is in the possession of an alleged perpetrator or discovered during a lawful search. Passing this commonsense measure helps **safeguard families and law enforcement officers**.

Providing COVID-19 Relief

My colleagues and I took swift and comprehensive action to **flatten the curve** and **support relief efforts** in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. We worked in our communities to assist in any way that we could and passed vital legislation to assist New Yorkers during this public health crisis.

I sponsored and helped pass legislation to reduce the pandemic's impact in our communities, including measures to:

- extend sick leave, paid family leave and disability benefits to those who are quarantined due to COVID-19 (Ch. 25 of 2020)
- provide \$100 million in short-term rental assistance to economically distressed New Yorkers through the Emergency Rent Relief Act (Ch. 125 of 2020)
- authorize industrial development agencies (IDAs) to provide loans to small businesses and not-for-profit organizations, as well as offer these establishments grants to purchase personal protective equipment (Ch. 109 of 2020)
- prohibit landlords from evicting tenants for unpaid rent during the COVID-19 state of emergency (Ch. 127 of 2020)
- require mortgage lenders to provide a six-month forbearance period to homeowners who lost income (Ch. 112 of 2020)



Congratulations to the National Red Hat Society for honoring our essential workers at the Poughkeepsie Dutchess Living Center, where Assemblymember Jacobson handed out hand sanitizer to the administrator Jessett Marcado on June 17.

Supporting Local Families

We witnessed numerous instances of price gouging medical supplies, such as face masks and hand sanitizer, which is why I supported legislation to **protect consumers from predatory business practices**. I co-sponsored a new law that prohibits price gouging of medical supplies and services and any other essential goods and services needed for the health or welfare of the community (Ch. 90 of 2020).

Another bill I co-sponsored and passed ensures school districts that closed due to COVID-19 will not have state aid withheld (Ch. 107 of 2020). Teachers and school staff members have been working hard throughout this pandemic to continue supporting students and families. I'll always do

whatever I can to help our dedicated educators and support students.

Families also shouldn't have to worry about their utility services getting shut off during these difficult times. I helped pass legislation to prevent utility companies from terminating services for New Yorkers who are unable to work or had their wages reduced due to a declared state of emergency (Ch. 108, 126 of 2020).

Saving the Independence of the Bridge Authority to Keep Tolls Low

Following the Governor's budget proposal to merge the New York State Bridge Authority into the Thruway Authority, I organized my Hudson Valley colleagues and community leaders to defeat this plan which would have drastically and detrimentally affected the economy and quality of life in the region.

There are five bridges of the Bridge Authority, including the Newburgh-Beacon Bridge, the Mid-Hudson Bridge between Highland and Poughkeepsie and the Bear Mountain Bridge.

Funds generated by bridges of the Bridge Authority must be spent only on the bridges of the Bridge Authority. If the proposed merger had succeeded, local tolls would have been increased to pay for roads and bridges in other parts of the State and not on the bridges which generated the tolls.

Defeating this proposal means that tolls will be kept low and ensures that funds generated by the Bridge Authority bridges will only be spent on the Bridge Authority bridges. **I will remain diligent and organize again to defeat any proposal which would threaten the independence of the New York State Bridge Authority.**

Bills sponsored by Assemblymember Jacobson that were passed in both houses

A.9154-A (Jacobson)/S.8494 (Skoufis)

- Enables the Town of Newburgh to create a new road improvement district to serve the properties located in the Ridge Hudson Valley development area, and to make changes to existing lighting districts.

A.8257 (Jacobson)/S.5188 (Mayer)

- Ensures that while polling locations are open, the entrance to and exit from the sites are not altered, except to increase access or to maintain public safety, and any alteration is clearly marked with signage next to the former entrance or exit. This measure limits voter confusion and potential barriers to voting.

A.9155 (Jacobson)/ S.7302-A (Skoufis)

- Allows the Town of Newburgh to implement a hotel and motel tax, which will boost the tourism industry and be paid for by out-of-towners except for in rare circumstances.



Assemblymember Jacobson donates hand sanitizer to Good Will Fire Department in the Town of Newburgh.



What a treat to have visitors from Newburgh Free Academy West and the Newburgh Free Library in the Assembly Chamber.



Assemblymember Jacobson donates hand sanitizer to Marlboro Fire Department in Ulster County.



Assemblymember Jacobson donates hand sanitizer to the Town of Newburgh Emergency Medical Services.



One June 13, Assemblymember Jacobson attended a Pride Flag Ceremony at Beacon City Hall with Mayor Lee Kyriacou and members of the Beacon City Council - Air Rhodes, Jodi McCredo, Dan Aymar-Blair, Amber Grant and George Mansfield. Also attending were Dutchess County Legislator Nick Page and Beacon City Administrator Anthony Ruggiero. Congratulations to all!



Assemblymember Jacobson stands proudly with the essential workers of 1199SEIU on Thursday, July 9, at Vassar Brothers Medical Center in Poughkeepsie.

Criminal Justice Reform

Everybody deserves to be treated equally in the eyes of the law. I co-sponsored several bills that were signed into law that help ensure all New Yorkers are treated fairly by police, including measures to:

- repeal section 50-a of the state Civil Rights Law and create an avenue for the public to access police disciplinary records in compliance with the state's existing Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) protections (Ch. 96 of 2020)
- establish the Law Enforcement Misconduct Investigative Office within the Department of Law headed by the Deputy Attorney General to receive and investigate complaints from any source or upon their own initiative concerning allegations of corruption, fraud, use of excessive force, criminal activity, conflicts of interest or abuse in a local law enforcement agency (Ch. 104 of 2020)
- require any law enforcement officer or peace officer who discharges a firearm to verbally report the firing of the gun to a police supervisor within six hours and provide a written report within 48 hours (Ch. 101 of 2020)
- require courts to maintain and report records concerning arrests and court proceedings involving

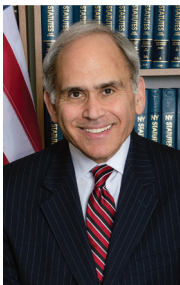
low-level offenses such as violations and traffic offenses, including aggregate and anonymized demographic information such as race, ethnicity and sex (Ch. 102 of 2020)

- affirm a person's right, unless they're under arrest or in custody, to record law enforcement activity and maintain custody of the recording (Ch. 100 of 2020)
- establish a civil right of action for individuals under the Civil Rights Law when a person calls 911 or summons a police officer when there is no reason to believe a crime is occurring and is motivated by bias based on the race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, religion, religious practice, disability or sexual orientation of the person reported (Ch. 93 of 2020)
- establish an Office of Special Investigation within the Attorney General's Office to investigate and prosecute incidents involving the death of a person caused by the act or omission of a police officer (Ch. 95 of 2020)



Assemblymember Jacobson donates masks for the police, fire and code enforcement departments in the City of Newburgh with Fire Chief, Lt. Kevin Lahar, Mayor Torrance Harvey and City Manager Joe Donat.

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM
Assemblymember
Jonathan Jacobson

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