



ASSEMBLYWOMAN PATRICIA A. FAHY



Legislative & Community Report to the 109th Assembly District

Dear Neighbor:

I am proud to represent you in the State Assembly and will continue to work hard in the upcoming 2014 legislative session. Enclosed are some legislative updates from this year, including on a number of issues that carry into 2014.

We have a unique district - city, suburban and rural; families that have been in the area for generations, newer ones from across our country and the globe, building their futures here; dedicated public employees, private sector employers and entrepreneurs; dozens of languages, faiths and nationalities blending together in one larger community with shared hopes and dreams:

- *A brighter future and quality schools for all our children.*
- *Good jobs with fair wages in a strong economy.*
- *Clean air and drinking water.*
- *A state government we can all be proud of.*
- *Safe streets for our children and our seniors in every neighborhood.*

Your voices matter on each of these fundamental issues and I welcome your input. Please join me at a future community coffee event, call my office, or sign up for our regular email updates at fahyp@assembly.state.ny.us

Assemblywoman
PATRICIA A. FAHY



2013 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Campaign finance reform remains a priority as we head into the 2014 session. Increased ethics-based disclosures, lower contribution limits, and the creation of a state public financing system are key tenets of changing the way campaigns are funded in New York State.

There is clearly a need to be more vigilant and aggressive in enforcing ethics laws in our state government. I strongly support campaign finance reform, stronger public trust legislation, and the need for public financing to prevent misuse in an effort to rebuild trust in our elected officials.

WOMEN'S EQUALITY LEGISLATION

The Assembly passed a ten point Women's Equality Act in the 2013 session to strengthen women's rights and reproductive rights. In the coming year, I remain committed to seeing that each of the ten points be brought back in full and passed by both houses of the legislature.

LT. COLONEL TODD CLARK MEMORIAL FLAG PRESENTMENT PROGRAM

I had the honor of sponsoring legislation along with Senator Farley to create the Lt. Colonel Todd Clark Memorial Flag Presentment Program. This provides for flags flown at half staff in memory of the death of



Assemblywoman Fahy meets with kindergarteners from New Scotland Elementary School on a trip to Indian Ladder Farms in Altamont.

a military soldier to be given to the next of kin. This is a small but important gesture of our appreciation to Lt. Colonel Clark and all of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our great country.

EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE PROVIDERS

I am proud to join Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk on a bill to require the state to provide timely payment of claims to early intervention service providers who provide critical services to infants and toddlers with disabilities. These services range from highly specialized therapies, such as speech therapy and occupational therapy, to parent training, counseling and more. Complications in recent state billing changes have delayed, or in some cases prevented, children from receiving these much needed services.

In addition to ensuring timely payments, the bill includes a provision whereby upfront costs are shared with the state or its fiscal agent while collecting payments from commercial insurers to reimburse the locality and the state.



Along with fellow state legislators and Education Commissioner Dr. John B. King Jr., Assemblywoman Fahy moderated the first of sixteen forums on Common Core standards and testing at Albany's Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School.

HEALTHCARE CHANGES: WHAT TO KNOW

Affordable Care Act: Good news for New Yorkers

The new, federal Affordable Care Act helps provide added health care security for families. The ACA improves access to health care coverage for all and should lower the cost of health care for individuals.

Thankfully, New York's enrollment system is up and running. Thousands of New Yorkers have enrolled for health coverage through the state's health benefit exchange - known as New York State of Health - under the ACA.

Enrollment began in early October and coverage through the exchange begins on January 1, 2014.

Here are some ways you can access the plan:

By Phone: (855) 355-5777

By E-Mail: exchange@health.state.ny.us

Online: www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov

KEEPING NEUTRAL LANGUAGE FOR REFERENDUMS

While voters approved the referendum to approve casino gaming in New York State, I opposed the fact that the referendum language was changed late in the process in a biased way to imply increased job growth and revenues, school aid, and property tax relief, despite the mixed history on sustained economic development from casino gaming. While increased net revenues are projected in the near term, there is no clear assurance that these revenues can be sustained or serve to lower



Assemblywoman Fahy joined Senators Cecilia Tkaczyk and Kathy Marchione in a forum hosted at Russell Sage College on women in government.

local property burdens in any significant manner.

For future referenda, I have proposed legislation that would require language to be written in a neutral manner to help voters decide whether to support an initiative without bias.

EDUCATION

The debate on too much testing in our public schools has grown over the last few months. Area state legislators and I held a public forum in June where we heard serious concerns from students, parents, and school officials about the negative impacts of premature testing related to the Common Core standards and the new teacher evaluation system (APPR). These concerns intensified when test scores came out later showing that the statewide passage rate was only 31%, with an even lower passage rate for students in high poverty urban and rural districts. State Education prematurely launched testing of the the new Common Core standards before teachers could adequately prepare their students.

In my September 24 Albany Times Union Commentary, "Tests are at the Core of Failure," I raised concerns about over-testing and poor implementation of the new standards and teacher evaluations.



Assemblywoman Fahy speaks to a government affairs class at Bethlehem High School.

Accountability is essential at all levels of education, but testing is far from the only avenue to achieve it. Testing students on material they have never been taught is setting them up for failure and shatters their self esteem. This is not the way to urge our young people to strive for college and career success.

In response, I am preparing related legislation to address some of the concerns that have been raised.

PUBLIC LEWDNESS

A recent incident of public lewdness in front of two middle school children prompted me to sponsor and introduce legislation to increase penalties and charges for those who commit acts of public lewdness in front of minors and repeat offenders.

The legislation creates a new charge of Public Lewdness in the first degree, elevating what had been a Class B misdemeanor to a Class A misdemeanor (up to one year in jail) for adults who intentionally expose a private or intimate body part in the presence of a child, and to increase penalties on repeat offenders who have been convicted of public lewdness within the previous year.

As a mother with a 14-year-old daughter who often walks to school or takes the bus, this recent indecent exposure incident hit close to home. Elevating penalties to a Class A misdemeanor for instances of indecent exposure to a minor or for repeat offenders of indecent exposure will strengthen the power of a judge to get these offenders off the streets as well as referred to mental health and appropriate services.



Assemblywoman Fahy and Guilderland Town Board Member Brian Forte at the Altamont Fair, with local business Printz & Patternz and Altamont Fair official, Marie McMillen.

SCCC OPENS IN ALBANY

Thanks to the vision of County Executive Dan McCoy, Mayor Jerry Jennings and others, access to higher education became easier with the opening of the Schenectady County Community College's satellite campus in downtown Albany (on 112 State Street). Courses at the extension site include Alternative Energy Technology, Chemical Dependency Counseling Certificate, Hospitality and Tourism Management, Medical Coding and Billing Certificate, Nanoscale Materials Technology, and Paralegal. Visit sunysccc.edu to enroll or for more information.



With Kathy Sheehan and Dorcey Applyrs, presenting a forum for the SUNY Center for Women in Government and Civil Society's Leadership class.

UPGRADES ON THE HORIZON FOR JOHN BOYD THACHER STATE PARK

Gov. Cuomo announced an outline of a master plan to revitalize one of our county's most popular parks.

Thacher Park is a local jewel that is treasured by New York residents, and its proper stewardship is essential. Those who gave input and worked on the master plan are to be congratulated. Their efforts, resulting in the plan's completion, will enable us to both protect the park and maximize its use long into the future.

Please visit www.friendsofthacherpark.org or <http://nysparks.com/inside-our-agency/master-plans.aspx> for additional information. Here are some recommendations from the plan:

- ✓ Expand and improve the trail network, one of the park's most popular features, including the creation of a new Tory Cave Trail extending north from the Indian Ladder Trail, developing a new trail to provide visual access to the Hailes Cave opening, and creating a 4.6 mile bike path connecting the Escarpment Trails to Thompson's Lake.
- ✓ Develop a rock climbing management plan to safely permit the activity in select areas of the park.
- ✓ Solicit proposals from concessionaires to develop a high ropes adventure course in the park.
- ✓ Design and install a mountain biking skills park and a series of looped trails in cooperation with mountain biking groups.
- ✓ Develop a management plan with the Northeast Caving Conservancy to permit cave exploration.
- ✓ Install a new "challenge course" recreation area at the former pool site incorporating elements such as swinging balance beam, triangle traverse, rope bridges and tire swings to test physical strength, stamina, agility, balance, and flexibility.



Community Coffee

Assemblywoman Fahy hosts regular “Community Coffees” at local businesses in the 109th district. These events are a great way to get to know the Assemblywoman’s staff as well as for updates for the New York State Legislature. Join our e-mail list and check the office’s social media pages to find out when the next Community Coffee will be coming near your neighborhood.

For the latest updates, sign up for our e-mail mailing list by visiting my website at:
www.assembly.state.ny.us/mem/Patricia-Fahy



Capital District Assembly Update

Assemblywoman Fahy joins Assemblymember McDonald for a new public access television program coming to Time Warner Cable subscribers that highlights legislative issues and happenings around the Capital Region. Check local listings for when “Capital District Assembly Update” airs next.



ASSEMBLYWOMAN
Patricia Fahy
Reports to the People

Assemblywoman Patricia A. Fahy

Albany Office Staff

Cathy Fahey – Staff Director

Dawn Reddy-Dugan – Legislative Aide

Ginnie Farrell – Legislative Aide & Scheduler

Joe Bonilla – Communications Coordinator



ALBANY OFFICE: Room 452 Legislative Office Building • Albany, New York 12248 • 518-455-4178

Email: fahyp@assembly.state.ny.us

Facebook: www.facebook.com/AssemblymemberPatriciaFahy Twitter: www.twitter.com/PatriciaFahy109

Web: www.assembly.state.ny.us/mem/Patricia-Fahy

