

A Message From ASSEMBLYMEMBER HARVEY EPSTEIN



ASSEMBLY MEMBER HARVEY EPSTEIN COMMUNITY BOARD 6 REPORT, FEBRUARY 2021

Information on Vaccines

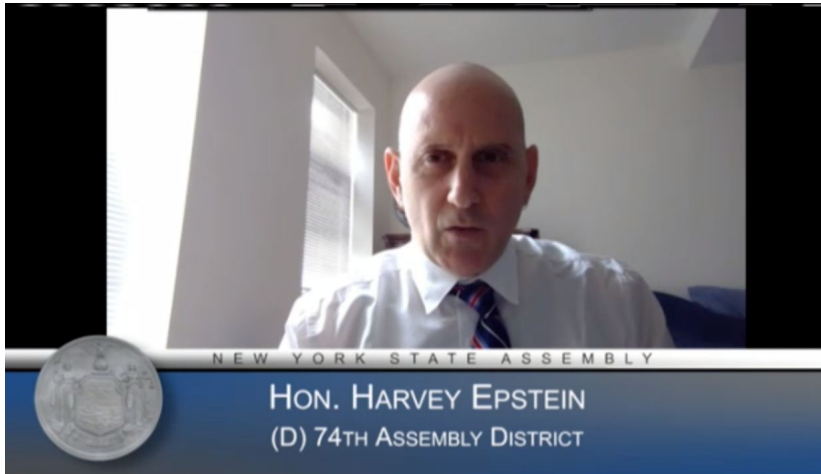
Vaccinations are by appointment only and New Yorkers can determine eligibility and find a provider to receive their first dose through the State's ["Am I Eligible" app](#) or call the New York State Vaccination Hotline at 1-833-NYS-4-VAX (1-833-697-4829). And New Yorkers will be able to schedule an appointment to receive the required second dose on site after receiving their first dose. New Yorkers should not attempt to book their second appointment online.

Repealing the Walking While Trans Ban

I am proud to report that last week in the Assembly we voted to repeal the Walking While Trans ban. This bigoted law gave police license to harass New Yorkers simply because of their appearance. For example: if you were standing outside after leaving a party dressed in a short skirt, a police officer could have made an arrest based on his inferences. This law has been enforced unevenly, with trans women and women of color being arrested



disproportionately. It was an honor to co-sponsor and vote for the repeal of the Walking While Trans ban and I want to thank Assemblymember Paulin, Senator Hoylman, and the advocates like TS Candii and Bianey Garcia who rallied around this important bill and got it done.



Supporting Workers Who Need A Vaccine

Last week, we also passed important legislation to ensure that workers who need to take time off to get vaccinated are able to do so, and are protected from any retaliation from their employer. The measure provides up to 4 hours of paid time off. I am hopeful the Governor will quickly sign this bill.

My Legislation to Legalize Accessory Dwelling Units

I have introduced legislation with Sen. Pete Harckham to legalize Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). ADUs are smaller homes on the same lot as a primary residence — including familiar home types such as “in-law units,” garage conversions, and basement apartments. By giving homeowners the opportunity to create ADUs, the bill will give critical help to both homeowners and renters. ADUs allow homeowners to bring in extra rental income, while growing the tax base for local governments. ADUs create new affordable housing without significantly changing the built character of a neighborhood. And by opening up new, affordable housing options where they don’t currently exist, ADUs can help diversify segregated neighborhoods and towns.

The bill would direct localities to ensure that ADUs are legal under local law, ensuring that local governments have flexibility to design local ADU laws to fit local needs without imposing overly-onerous restrictions on homeowners. The New York State Department of State would work with local governments to make sure local laws meet state requirements and protect both homeowners and renters. And the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal would create a financing program to make sure low- and moderate-income homeowners are able to access the benefits of ADUs.

Academic and policy experts agree that ADU legalization could help to address New York’s profound housing crisis. A recent paper from the Furman Center at NYU explains that New York has “fewer homes, more expensive rents, and starker segregation... [driven by] the most exclusionary zoning in

the country.” The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this problem, illuminating the need to address overcrowding and provide safe, affordable accommodations in every neighborhood, town, and city. The Regional Plan Association’s recent “Be My Neighbor” report found that legalizing ADU construction and conversions could create over 300,000 new homes just in the Hudson Valley, Long Island, and New York City.

The bill is backed by a broad coalition of housing advocates from across the state, including Asian Americans For Equality, Allied Community Enterprises, Basement Apartments Safe for Everyone (BASE) Campaign, Chhaya CDC, Citizens Housing and Planning Council, CNY Fair Housing, Community Housing Innovations, Cypress Hills LDC, ERASE Racism, Enterprise Community Partners, Fair Housing Justice Center, Habitat for Humanity New York City, Housing Rights Initiative, Open New York, Pratt Center For Community Development, Regional Plan Association, Westchester Residential Opportunities, and more.

I look forward to building additional support for this legislation and I welcome input from community board members.

Budget Update

As you may already know, the Governor released his budget, which lacked serious-minded proposals to raise the revenue New York needs to recover from the economic shocks of COVID-19. Even before the pandemic, many of our state’s social services were not fully funded. I have been consistently advocating with my colleagues to raise taxes on the 116 billionaires that call New York home. We are advancing a 6 bill package of revenue raisers known as the [Invest in Our New York Act](#) that would raise \$50 billion in revenue from the wealthiest New Yorkers, corporations, and the financial sector.

Between now and April 1, when the budget is due, the Assembly and Senate will hold budget hearings to hear from agencies and advocates about what their funding priorities are. In early March, each house will release its own budget proposal. From March to April 1, the Legislature and the Executive will negotiate on a final budget. I will continue to push for higher taxes on billionaires and the legalization of marijuana in a way that ensures the communities of color that have been harmed most by the drug war are reinvested in.

A Successful Bag And PPE Giveaway

Last week, my staff and I distributed reusable shopping bags and PPE by Gristedes on 2nd Avenue. If you have suggestions for other locations at which to hold more giveaways, I am happy to hear from you at help.district74@gmail.com or during full board.



*Feel free to contact Assembly Member Harvey Epstein's office with any questions or concerns.
Our office is located at
107 Avenue B (store front)
You can email us at epsteinh@nyassembly.gov or call us at 212-979-9696*