

A Message From ASSEMBLYMEMBER HARVEY EPSTEIN



ASSEMBLY MEMBER HARVEY EPSTEIN COMMUNITY BOARD 6 REPORT, SEPTEMBER 2022

Dear Neighbor,

I hope you had a great summer. Below you'll find information on what our team and I have been up to. I'm excited to share some updates on some of my bills that recently got signed by the governor, as well as a new campaign we launched to make it easier for students to ride public transit to and from school and extracurricular activities.

See you around the district,

Harvey

New COVID-19 Boosters Available

New Yorkers are urged to get the updated COVID-19 vaccine booster

The updated bivalent COVID-19 booster vaccines, from Pfizer and Moderna, protect you against the original COVID-19 virus and the current BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron subvariants.

NYC Health + Hospitals now has the updated bivalent COVID-19 booster available for all our patients. Make an appointment today at any of our hospitals or Gotham Health Centers in your neighborhood.

The updated booster is available for those who have already completed their primary COVID-19 vaccine series or booster at least two months ago. [Learn more](#)

[Make an appointment](#) | Call 877-829-4692 for an appointment | [NYC Vaccine Finder](#)

Who can get the updated COVID-19 booster shot?

- Young people from age 12 -17 can only receive the updated Pfizer booster vaccine.
- Adults 18 and older can receive the updated Pfizer or the updated Moderna COVID-19 booster vaccine.

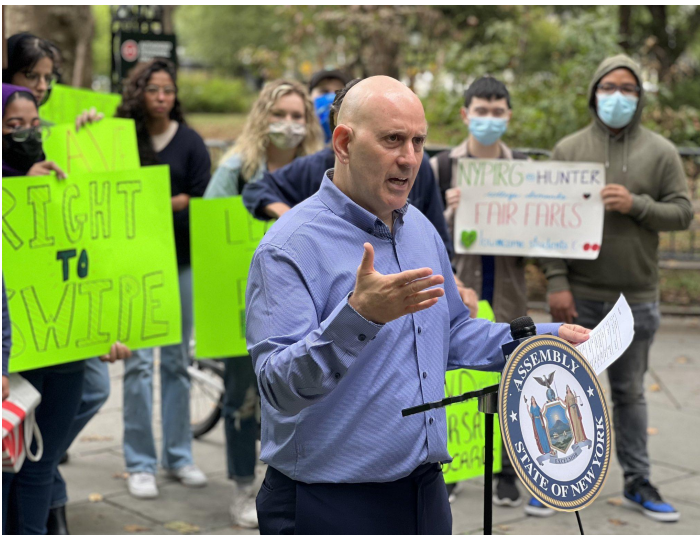
[Read the CDC vaccine and booster recommendation by age](#)

Why you should get the updated booster shot.

If you completed a COVID-19 primary vaccine series, you will be considered up-to-date when you receive the booster dose recommended for you by the CDC.

- 90% of all current COVID-19 cases are caused by the BA.5 subvariant.
- Getting the updated vaccine booster will increase your protection against getting very sick or needing to go to the hospital if you get COVID-19.

Joining Students to Fight for MetroCard Reforms



I was proud to join youth activists in our 74th Assembly District Youth Council, Senator John Liu, Councilmembers Joseph and Avilés, and transit justice advocates to unveil a package of bills aimed at making it easier for students to get to and from school and extracurricular activities. We drafted legislation to expand the hours student MetroCards are valid from 5:30 a.m. and 8:30 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m (A8244/S7491). Additional legislation (A8245/S7492) would prohibit fines for students who use their MetroCards to travel to activities that take place when school is not in session, such as a holiday or a snow day.

The legislation addresses problems with the existing student MetroCard policy identified by the 74th Assembly District Youth Council. Building on the Council’s advocacy in 2019 to replace half-fare MetroCards with full-fare MetroCards for every eligible student, they fielded a survey of their peers and used the data collected to target changes to hours and enforcement of penalties against students.

Under the status quo, the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) requests additional cards from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) for use by students traveling outside the hours typical student MetroCards work. It falls to individual schools to make students aware that they can obtain such a card. However, based on student accounts and MTA data, those cards are disbursed less frequently than the standard 5:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m. student MetroCard, leaving many students stranded.

Update on Jacob Riis Houses

On Friday, September 3rd I was informed of test results provided to the City indicating arsenic in the tap water of Jacob Riis Houses NYCHA development, in the southern portion of our district. We immediately contacted all residents for whom we had contact info and have been on-site daily assisting with food and water distribution.

While the City has concluded that there is not and never was arsenic the water at Riis Houses, we have more questions. [I wrote to the Mayor](#) along with my colleagues

with a long list of questions, including what is going to be done to rebuild trust between NYCHA and residents, as well as how they will be compensated for the suffering this episode has caused. We are also pushing for residents to be compensated for arsenic poisoning testing, if that is something they want to pursue.

I will continue to keep our community informed as we hear back from the City. [You can read the letter here.](#)



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Our Efforts to Clean up Tompkins Square Park

Our office has been partnering with volunteers in the community every month to clean up Tompkins Square Park. It's been a pleasure to work with our neighbors to make our public spaces more inviting. I look forward to continuing these efforts. If you are interested in participating, information on our next park clean up day is available in our e-blast.

Two of My Bills Become Law

Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy (SUDEP) is responsible for the deaths of about 3,000 Americans every year. Sadly, this condition took the life of one of my constituents. In partnership with the family and Senator Brad Hoylman, I introduced legislation to require epileptic patients be informed by their doctors about the existence of this condition so that preventative steps can be taken to save lives.

I'm happy to report that the bill was signed into law last month. I want to thank Tim and Alexis Gembka, two constituents I represent, for bringing the idea for this legislation to our office, and for their advocacy on behalf of all families of people with epilepsy.

I am also proud to announce that my bill (A8599) requiring employment opportunities to be posted on the department of civil service website, and that positions designated for the state's employment program for people with disabilities and veterans with disabilities be easily identifiable in postings has been signed by the governor. This legislation ensures that civil service jobs are accessible to all and I was proud to work with advocates for New Yorkers with disabilities and Senator Brad Hoylman to pass the bill.

New Concealed Carry Measures Take Effect

Strengthened gun laws enacted following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to strike down the state's century-old pistol permitting process take effect [Thursday, September 1](#). The laws contain strengthened background checks and firearm safety and live-fire training for individuals seeking to obtain concealed carry permits; prohibit concealed carry permit holders from bringing their firearms into sensitive locations, including Times Square, bars, libraries, schools, government buildings and hospitals, among others; and require renewal or recertification of permits every three years.

Visit the new [Gun Safety Website](#) to provide the public, gun owners, and gun dealers with comprehensive information about all of the new requirements under state law.

My Testimony to the MTA on Congestion Pricing

The effects of traffic congestion are felt by all New Yorkers regardless of how they travel around the city. Traffic congestion contributes to poor air quality, increased risk of crashes, noise pollution, and wasted time. When quantified, the costs of these negative impacts are in the billions of dollars.

As the MTA and the Traffic Mobility Review Board weigh the implementation



of the congestion pricing plan, I urged them to make the resident exemption fairer. Under current law, the exemption for residents kicks for households earning less than \$60,000 a year. The difference between a one person household earning \$60,000 annually and a family of four earning \$60,000 is huge. That's why I suggested the exemption be based on area median income (AMI).

Residents leaving the central business district on evenings and weekends do not increase the type congestion the project targets and I argued that tolls should reflect that.

Behind the dollar costs of traffic congestion are frustrations, inefficiencies and even tragedies: wasted time, missed appointments, deadly crashes and pollution. We don't have a lot of time to address the problems caused by traffic congestion, specifically pollution. We established a goal in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act to reduce our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 85% below 1990-level GHG emissions by 2050. I believe congestion pricing will help us meet that critical goal while also reducing the other negative effects of traffic congestion.

Central Business District Tolling Program: Notice of Availability of Environmental Assessment and Public Hearings - DEADLINE TO COMMENT EXTENDED to 9/23

Visit <https://new.mta.info/project/CBDTP/public-hearing-notice> for more information.

The Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority (an affiliate of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority), the New York State Department of Transportation, and the New York City Department of Transportation, are proposing the Central Business District (CBD) Tolling Program (the Project) to reduce traffic congestion in the Manhattan CBD in a manner that will generate revenue for future transportation improvements, pursuant to acceptance into the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Value Pricing Pilot Program.

In compliance with applicable regulations implemented pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 771, an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of, and mitigation for, the CBD Tolling Program, and has been approved by FHWA for public availability.

As a project requiring FHWA approval, the Project is subject to the requirements of Section 4(f) of the United States Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (now codified in 23 U.S.C. §138 and 49 U.S.C. §303), and the FHWA implementing regulation, 23 CFR Part 774. In accordance with the applicable regulations, and as documented in the EA, the FHWA intends to make a *de minimis* impact finding for the Section 4(f) use of Central Park and the High Line by the Project. The FHWA is soliciting comments from the public on the proposed *de minimis* impact determination for Central Park and the High Line.

Ways to Comment by 9/23

Online: [mta.info/CBDTP/comment](https://new.mta.info/CBDTP/comment)

Email: CBDTTP@mtabt.org

Mail: CBD Tolling Program, 2 Broadway, 23rd Floor, New York, NY 10004

Phone: 646-252-7440

Fax: 212-504-3148 Attn: CBDTP

Send Comments Directly to FHWA

Email: CBDTP@dot.gov

Mail: FHWA - NY Division, RE: CBDTP, Leo W. O'Brien Federal Building, 11A, Clinton Ave, Suite 719, Albany, NY 12207

Visit <https://new.mta.info/project/CBDTP/public-hearing-notice> for more information.

Upcoming Events