

Assemblymember  
**Harvey Epstein**

Assembly District 74



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Dear Neighbor,

I am looking forward to turning our attention to the rent laws. I hope you all use your voices and join me in this fight to protect tenants and strengthen the rent laws for all New Yorkers.

See you around the district,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harvey Epstein", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Harvey

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## **What's Wrong with the Big Ugly**

The federal government requires that the budget gets initiated by Congress and gives Congress a lot of power in the process. Here in New York, the governor has the power to introduce the budget and the power to amend it or not.

This power was reinforced by a court decision *Silver v Pataki* which confirmed that the governor had even more power.

So this year, we were told we could not raise income taxes, stock transfer or pier-a-tier taxes. That put us in a terrible position funding public education at public schools or colleges at SUNY and CUNY

When it came time to vote, we were faced with a choice to accept the budget bill called the 'big ugly' because it is exactly that. It is big, it is ugly, and it is, quite frankly, undemocratic.

Instead of using this newfound democratic power in Albany as a way to make a meaningful, lasting, powerful change in the way our democracy operates, and give way to brand new possibilities, we were forced to pick and choose between what mattered more - or what issue was more important than the other. We were pitted against each other and were given no room for more conversations. We were force fed a budget that only skimmed the tip of the iceberg on the reforms that we were all calling for. The system in Albany is clearly broken.

We must reform the budget process. The only way to do that is through a constitutional amendment. Otherwise, the budget process will never change.

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## News from Albany

***Fighting to Protect Tenants and Strengthening Rent Regulations in New York - Hearing May 2nd  
250 Broadway - Come and Be Counted***



This week, we reaffirmed the Assembly Majority's commitment to strengthen rent regulation laws and to enact new key tenant protections in New York State by announcing a comprehensive package of protections for renters. **Rent regulations are set to expire on June 15 of this year and the Assembly will hold public hearings on May 2 and May 9 to discuss the proposals and how best to protect tenants in New York. To find out more about the hearings and how you can testify [click here](#).**

Among the issues we are tackling this legislative session are:

1. Eliminating the Major Capital Improvement and Individual Apartment Improvement systems
2. Protecting tenants currently paying a preferential rent by requiring a lease renewal to be based on the preferential rent instead of the maximum legal regulated rent

3. Eliminating vacancy decontrol and bonuses, which have incentivized for landlords to resort to unscrupulous tactics to push out tenants and resulted in a loss of regulated housing stock to the free market
4. Capping rent increases for rent-controlled apartments at the lesser of an amount equal to the previous five Rent Guidelines Board increases for one year stabilized renewal leases or 7.5 percent
5. Making it easier for rent-regulated tenants to sue for rent overcharges by increasing the statute of limitations to make such a complaint
6. Protecting tenants in former Mitchell-Lama housing that has been bought out
7. Strengthening regulations to ensure that tenants in apartments leased by non-profits remain regulated under a lease of that type
8. Extending rent stabilization to tenants living in former Section 8 projects, whether or not they were occupied on or after January 1st, 1974 the cut off date for a unit to be rent stabilized
9. Creating protections for mobile homeowners, who currently have no remedies to fight unjustified rent increases
10. Expanding the geographic area prescribed by the Emergency Tenant Protection Act to allow more municipalities to opt into a system of rent stabilization
11. Preventing landlords from acting in bad faith to recover more than actual damages if a tenant has to break a lease

Now we need your voice more than ever. Call the Governor and say you support our platform, come to the assembly hearing on May 2nd and testify. We need you to get this done but will not win this without you. If you have questions about the bills listed here, you can find more information on them [here](#) or call my office at 212-979-9696 with your comments and suggestions.

### ***SCAR Act Lobby Day***

This week, to address the crisis of forcibly separated children at the border, I alongside Senator Brian Benjamin held a press conference to push our legislation to increase accountability of the federal government's detention of children being held in facilities in New York state. ([A.1436A](#))

Despite the Trump administration's reversal of the family separation policy some 9 months ago, recent reports show that separation continues, with children being dispersed to foster care agencies across the country and in this state, often with no system in place to track their whereabouts. We need to live our values as New Yorkers by standing up for these marginalized children and families. By passing the SCAR Act, we can provide the transparency and accountability we hope will facilitate the reunification process and enable leaders to help meet the needs of the victims of Trump's cruel policy while they remain in limbo.

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## **News from the District**

### ***M14 Updates***

A few weeks ago, I joined colleagues, advocacy groups, and community members to call on the MTA to keep our local stops along the M14 line. While I understand the efficiency of select bus stops, I do not support the plan to remove local stops when creating select bus service. It is unacceptable to take away stops and inconvenience those who use this bus most often. My hope is still that the outcome of the community outreach process mounted by the MTA and DOT will be a plan that fills the gap in L Train service, speeds up bus travel times for the thousands that rely on the M14, and respects the legitimate concerns of residents who live along the 14th Street corridor and adjacent streets. Read more about the [M14 plan here](#). If you have any comments, questions, or concerns, please send them to the [MTA here](#), or as always, call my office at 212-979-9696.

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## **In the News**

[Bill Would Require Tracking of Displaced Immigrant Children in New York State](#)

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