

Assemblymember
Harvey Epstein

Assembly District 74



ALBANY OFFICE

Room 427 LOB, Albany, NY 12248
Phone: (518) 455-5506
EpsteinH@nyassembly.gov

DISTRICT OFFICE

250 Broadway
22nd Floor - Suite 2234
New York, New York 10007
Phone: (212) 979-9696

Dear Neighbor,

What a session! I am proud to have been a part of such a productive time in Albany. We did so much for so many and all New Yorkers should be proud. This session, I co-sponsored 395 bills, 48 of those passed Assembly, 36 of those passed both houses. Six bills which I prime sponsor also passed the Assembly.

Since January, the Assembly Majority worked closely with our colleagues in the Senate to hold important hearings on sexual harassment in the workplace and single payer health care and passed vital legislation on issues such as: increasing voter access; codifying the protections of Roe v. Wade; strengthening laws to prevent gun violence; increasing the number of speed cameras in school zones; allowing victims of childhood sexual assault to seek justice; ending the 'gay panic' defense, banning gay conversion therapy and protecting trans New Yorkers; and reshaping our economy to take a proactive approach to prevent the crises caused by climate change.

While I believe that budget adopted in April fell far short on a number of important issues, including fully funding public housing in our city, we were able to deliver strong criminal justice reforms that will make New York a fairer place by implementing discovery and speedy trial reform. We also created a dedicated funding stream for the MTA to improve accessibility in stations and upgrade our antiquated transportation system.

In the final weeks of session, we passed legislation to: increase wages for car wash workers; end discriminatory pricing for gendered goods; and enable undocumented New Yorkers to apply for a driver's license, ensuring that more qualified, accountable drivers are on the road and creating equity for these New Yorkers, who have been senselessly forced into the shadows.

We also passed the Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act, granting collective bargaining rights, workers' compensation and unemployment benefits to farmworkers. This act reverses a 1937 state law that excludes farmers from some labor protections including the right to unionize. It amends the labor law, in relation to granting collective bargaining rights to farm laborers and allowing farm workers one day of rest each week and including farm laborers within the provisions pertaining to overtime compensation and unemployment insurance.

A signature achievement, affecting millions of New Yorkers, is the enactment of The Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019, which would enshrine the strongest tenant protections in the state's history. Read more about the act below.

With all of the major wins we had, we also missed the mark on some vital pieces of legislation that I hope we can pass next year, including legalization of adult use marijuana to combat the injustice of the racist and classist drug war and putting an end to the cruel practice of solitary confinement.

Harvey

Recap of this Legislative Session

We accomplished a great deal this session and I am incredibly proud of the work that was done. Here's a list of just some of what the New York State Assembly passed down below:

- Voting Reforms
 - Early Voting (A.780)
 - Combining non-presidential and state primaries (A.779)
 - Same Day Voter Registration (A.777)
 - Restriction of LLC Campaign Contributions (A.776)
- GENDA (A.747)
- Ban Gay Conversion Therapy (A.576)
- Eliminate the Gay and Trans Panic Defense (A.08375)
- Reproductive Health Act (A.21)
- Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act (A.585A)
- Equal Rights Amendment (A.271)
- Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act (A.3974)
- End Discriminatory Pricing for Gendered Goods (A.629)
- Child Victims Act (A.2683)
- DREAM Act (A.782)
- Drivers Licenses for All (A.3675B)

- Minimum Wage for Car Wash Workers (A.6346C)
- Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act (A.2750)
- Protections for Employees Who Have Been Sexually Harassed (A.8421)
- The Red Flag Bill (A.2689)
- Background Checks (A. 2690 & A.1213)
- Climate Leadership And Community Protection Act (A.8429)
- Decriminalization of Marijuana & expungement of records for certain offenses (A.8420-A)
- School Zone Speed Cameras (A.6449)

If you have any questions about the legislation above, please feel free to call my office at 212-979-9696, or if you'd like to look up the legislation above, please go to <https://nyassembly.gov/leg/> and search bill numbers provided.

Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019

In addition to all the great progressive legislation we passed this session, we also passed the strongest package of tenant protections in New York's history. Some of the biggest changes include:

- Extending the Rent Regulation Laws and Makes them Permanent.

Reforming Rent Increases for Major Capital Improvements (MCIs):

- Lowering the rent increase cap from six percent to two percent.
- Eliminating MCI increases after 30 years instead of allowing them to remain in effect permanently.
- Significantly tightening the rules governing what spending may qualify for MCI increases and tightening enforcement of those rules by requiring that 25 percent of MCIs be inspected and audited.

Reforming Rent Increases for Individual Apartment Improvements (IAIs):

- Capping the amount of IAI spending at \$15,000 over a 15-year period and allowing owners to make up to three IAIs during that time.
- Making IAI increases temporary for 30 years rather than permanent and requiring owners to clear any hazardous violations in the apartment before collecting an increase.

Repealing High Rent Vacancy Deregulation & High Income Deregulation:

- Repealing the provisions that allow the removal of units from rent stabilization when the rent crosses a statutory high-rent threshold and the unit becomes vacant or the tenant's income is \$200,000 or higher in the preceding two years.

- Previous provisions led to the deregulation of more than 300,000 units since they were first passed in 1994.

Repealing the Vacancy Bonus & Longevity Bonus:

- Repealing the "vacancy bonus" provision that allows a property owner to raise rents as much as 20 percent each time a unit becomes vacant.
- Prohibiting local Rent Guidelines Boards from reinstating vacancy bonus on their own.

Making Preferential Rents the Base Rent for Lease Renewal Increases:

- Prohibiting owners who have offered tenants a "preferential rent" below the legal regulated rent from raising the rent to the full legal rent upon renewal.

I am also proud to report that several of my bills were adapted as part of the act. Those include:

Reforming Co-Op/Condo Conversions:

- Eliminating the option of "eviction plans" and instituting reforms for non-eviction plans.
- Requiring 51 percent of tenants in residence to agree to purchase apartments before the conversion can be effective. (Currently, 15 percent of apartments must be sold and the purchasers may be outside investors.)

Enhancing protections for tenants by:

- Banning the use of so-called "tenant blacklists" which protects tenants who enforce their rights.
- Ending the current practice of allowing owners to avoid treble damages if they voluntarily return the amount of the rent overcharge prior to a decision being made by a court or Housing and Community Renewal
- Limiting MCI's to reasonable and customary costs for the work

I am proud to have worked with the Housing Justice for All coalition to deliver these landmark reforms and I look forward to continuing this work in partnership with them.



Photo credit: Vincent Barone

Student MetroCards

Over the last year I worked to end a problem system — Half-Fare MetroCard for public school students. Right now students who live less than 2 miles from their school must pay half fare—currently \$1.35—in exact change when boarding the bus to get to school. As a result, students with these MetroCards are forced to carry \$13.50 in coins per week just to get to school and then return home. They are only allowed to take local buses and not that subway for the privilege to use their half price card.

This is a social justice and equity issue for at least 130,000 students who are forced to pay to go to public school. No school-age child who travels to school and then home can realistically be expected to carry the remaining fare—a total of \$13.50 in change per week—that makes the half-fare cards useable. The MTA and DOE heard our advocacy and on May 22nd the MTA voted to give these students three free fair cards. A huge win for 130,000 public school students.

I commend the MTA for working towards a solution to provide more equity in transportation for New York's students and I thank for implementing full-fare cards to these students in time for the 2019-20 school year.

Job Opportunities

NYC Parks is actively recruiting city residents interested in joining the agency's Parks Enforcement Patrol and the Parks Security Service.

Parks Enforcement Patrol

The Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) provides a safe and clean environment for all New Yorkers to enjoy. PEP officers are uniformed, shielded officers who provide security and safety in city parks, provide information about Parks rules to patrons, and safeguard Parks' wildlife and facilities. PEP officers are empowered to issue summonses for violations and to make arrests. In addition to regular patrols, PEP patrols city parks by bicycle, horseback, and on scooters.

Interested applicants can go to nyc.gov/careers/search and search for Job ID# 389381.

Preference will be given to applicants who file for the upcoming Urban Park Ranger Civil Service Examination (Exam No. 9055). The filing period begins May 1, 2019 and ends on May 21, 2019.

For details, visit www.nyc.gov/dcas, 1) click on "Employment", 2) click on "Take an Exam", 3) click on "Current & Upcoming Exams".

Parks Security Service

The Parks Security Service are City Seasonal Aides/Security Guards and perform routine patrols of parks, beaches, pools and related facilities to promote proper use and enjoyment of parks. The positions are scheduled to start in May 2019 and end in September 2019. The starting salary is \$15.00 per hour.

Interested applicants can go to nyc.gov/careers/search and search for Job ID# 381437.

The United States Census Bureau is hiring members of its Census Team. Members of the Census Team play a vital role by working to provide an accurate census, which ensures New York receives adequate federal funding and representation in Congress. Visit this link to learn more and apply.

If you would like to unsubscribe and stop receiving emails from this Assemblymember [click here](#) .