

## A Message From ASSEMBLYMEMBER HARVEY EPSTEIN



Dear Neighbor,

I am deeply disappointed that the Governor pushed a disturbing provision into this budget which should have only been about revenue and the COVID 19 crisis. One of the worst parts of the budget, which I voted against, was the roll back on ending cash bail which puts New Yorkers awaiting trial in prisons during the greatest public health challenge our state has faced in over 100 years. These changes will result in thousands of New Yorkers being incarcerated, which in turn will result in more people in prisons contracting COVID-19, including incarcerated people, workers and their families. This roll back includes numerous misdemeanor offenses. It's unconscionable. You can read the full explanation of my votes below.

See you soon,

Harvey

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### **In This Newsletter:**

1. New York State's Terrible Budget Update
2. CUNY Virtual Town Hall - April 7th
3. COVID-19 Federal Recovery Check Information
4. New Guidance on Face Coverings
5. Education Resources
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### **New York State's Terrible Budget**



I am appalled at this budget that jeopardizes the health of New Yorkers by rolling back bail reforms to incarcerate New Yorkers and cuts Medicaid during a public health crisis. The enacted budget is riddled with poison pills, from new ballot admission thresholds that could kick political third parties off the ballot (like the Green Party and WFP), to a failure to close the TAP gap or provide any additional aid to our CUNY or SUNY system, to a 1 billion dollar state cut in school aid, to cuts to our strong non-profit organizations serving low-income New Yorkers, and changes to the Greenlight Law which could endanger undocumented New Yorkers by not safeguarding their personal information from immigration authorities. Finally, this bill also gives up our authority over the budget by allowing the Governor to make additional cuts in the budget every quarter over the next year.

We also missed a moment to raise taxes on the wealthiest New Yorkers. I believe it is totally unjustifiable that the 112 billionaires and thousands of millionaires in New York State will not be asked to pay more in taxes to fund our state's essential services, especially in this moment of economic crisis. Nonetheless, this budget found the money to provide capital funding to prisons. Funding for public housing, on the other hand, was not delivered.

For all these reasons, I voted no on the Transportation, Economic Development and Environmental Conservation bill (A9508B), Education, Labor, and Family Assistance bill (A9506B), and the Capital bill (A9504C).

I want to acknowledge some bright spots in what is otherwise a profoundly disappointing budget:

- A ban on most styrofoam containers that will make New York one of the leaders in environmental protection
- A promising environmental bond act that could generate billions to be used to retrofit public buildings, including public housing, making them more environmentally friendly and helping us to manage the issue related to climate change
- A hydrofracking ban that ends the practice in the state (in the future we must go further and prohibit hydrofracked gas from other jurisdictions from entering our state)
- Surrogacy for families who want that as an option
- Prevailing wage in construction projects when the developer gets 25% or more funding from government sources (excluding affordable housing)
- A measure to end the "Pink Tax" by prohibiting gender-based pricing discrimination for substantially similar or like kind goods and services
- Sick leave expansion that helps employees of small and medium businesses
- A rejection of SUNY tuition hikes beyond Academic Year (AY) 2021

I look forward to the opportunity to return to Albany and continue fighting for public housing residents, those who have been treated unfairly by our criminal justice system, and New Yorkers who have been marginalized.

## CUNY Virtual Town Hall



**CUNY RISING ALLIANCE PRESENTS:**

**THE REAL CUNY EXPERIENCE VIRTUAL TOWNHALL EDITION**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2020 @ 8:00PM-9:30 PM**

Register here (first 100):  
[https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/vpMsfumqrzkt0cyedUPhL5HB7AE\\_KuttCA](https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/vpMsfumqrzkt0cyedUPhL5HB7AE_KuttCA)

**TOPIC OF DISCUSSION:**  
We are going to be speaking with community organizers and elected officials to talk about the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and to have a REAL and AUTHENTIC conversation in hearing from YOU, the CUNY community on issues you are experiencing, resources and support you may need during this time.

**OUR FIRST GUEST:**  
**HARVEY EPSTEIN**  
NYS ASSEMBLYMEMBER  
74th DISTRICT

**MODERATED BY:**  
**JAMELL N.A. HENDERSON,**  
M.P.A., M.P.P.  
CUNY RISING ALLIANCE COORDINATOR

**SPONSORED BY:** YOUNG INVINCIBLES, NYPIRG, PSC CUNY, USS

[Click here](#) or the flyer above to register to join me on **Tuesday, April 7th at 8pm** to talk about issues CUNY is facing during COVID-19. We will be talking about the available resources and support that may be available to you during this time. Don't miss it.

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### **COVID-19 Federal Recovery Check Information**

The federal CARES Act authorizes recovery checks for US taxpayers in response to the 2019 novel coronavirus. These payments will be automatic and are based on 2019 and 2018 tax returns.

- The payments will be for \$1,200 for individual filers and \$2,400 for joint filers
- Individual and joint filers with up to \$75,000 and \$150,000 in adjusted gross income, respectively, will receive the full payment
- For every \$100 a taxpayer earns over the income threshold, the payment will be reduced by \$5 up to \$99,000 for single filers and \$198,000 for joint filers
- Quality parents with children under 17 will receive up to \$500 per dependent

The IRS will use banking information from taxpayers' 2018 or 2019 tax returns to directly deposit the payment. The Treasury plans to open a website for taxpayers to update their direct deposit information if it was not included on their most recent return. Those who have not yet filed 2019 taxes are urged to do so as soon as possible.

If you have filed a 2018 or 2019 tax return or receive Social Security benefits, you don't need to take any further action to receive your check.

Certain groups that don't usually file tax returns, such as low-income individuals, students, retirees, veterans, those who are unemployed, and people with disabilities, will need to file a 2019 simple tax return to receive the payment.

The payments will be made available through the end of 2020. For more information, including how to file simple tax returns, visit [IRS.gov/coronavirus](https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus).

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### **New Guidance on Face Coverings**

As of Thursday afternoon, the Mayor and DOHMH have issued new guidance on face coverings. People who do not show symptoms may still be able to spread COVID-19. A face covering can help prevent you from spreading COVID-19 to other people, so you should wear one whenever you leave the home. A face covering will not protect you from infection, but it can help others.

A face covering can include anything that covers your nose and mouth, including dust masks, scarves and bandanas. Do not use health care worker masks, as those must be preserved for people in the healthcare system. Even if you have a face covering, continue to stay home as much as possible and avoid close contact with other people.

There's a helpful FAQ here: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/covid-19-face-covering-faq.pdf>

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### **Education Resources**

We have created a sheet full of resources in coordination with CEC1 and the offices of Council Member Carlina Rivera, and Assemblymember Yuh-Line Niou. [You can find that here.](#)

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### **Quote of the Day**

[8th Amendment](#)

Excessive bail shall not be required nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishment inflicted.

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#### **In the News**

1. [De Blasio pushing for rent freeze](#) - Politico
2. [Pro-bail reform conference invaded by racists who called lawmakers the n-word](#) - Queens Eagle
3. [State budget passes, bail reform rolled back](#) - NNY 360
4. [New York Lawmakers at Budget Impasse](#) - WFUV