



NEWS FROM

Speaker of the Assembly Carl E. Heastie



Speaker Heastie and Chief of Staff Jevonni Brooks kneel to honor our fallen brothers and sisters.

Dear Neighbor,

It has been a very challenging year. Our community has stayed strong throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and the protests against police brutality.

The murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor by police officers were absolutely unacceptable. The Assembly Majority and I have enacted legislation to make sure bad cops can't hide behind bureaucracy. This is just another step in our ongoing fight to ensure justice and equality. Be assured the Assembly Majority and I will continue to fight against racism and injustice to ensure people have the opportunities they deserve.

Additionally, we were able to provide a new program that offers emergency assistance to renters who have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In these terribly challenging times, we need to make sure our most vulnerable members of the community do not suffer disproportionately.

We also need significant federal stimulus funding to effectively and completely address the sheer magnitude of these challenges and support people experiencing homelessness, hunger and poverty as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Assembly Majority will

continue to support and stand by hardworking New Yorkers now, during this continued public health crisis and as we forge a path forward.

While these laws are important first steps, it is only the beginning and there's still much work to be done. Please feel free to contact me if there is anything I can help you with, my email is speaker@nyassembly.gov. As always, my office is here to serve you.

With Love and Hope,

Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly

1446 E. Gun Hill Road • Bronx, NY 10469
718-654-6539 • speaker@nyassembly.gov

COVID-19's Impact on the Northeast Bronx YMCA Construction

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, and the rise of confirmed COVID-19 cases statewide, nonessential construction was banned across the state. As a result, construction of the state-of-the-art \$60 million Northeast Bronx YMCA was halted, delaying the original expected completion date. As we continue to flatten the curve and fight this invisible enemy, New York has begun to re-open in phases, prioritizing the health and safety of all residents of our great state.

Currently, New York City is in Phase 3, allowing for construction of our long-awaited community center to resume this week. We are a long way from getting back to what was defined as normal, but we will continue to work towards our goal. The Northeast Bronx has long yearned for an intergenerational space that would provide resources for all in our community, and although delayed, it has not been denied.

Assembly Passes Progressive Law Enforcement Reform Legislation

This comprehensive legislative package will help ensure bad police officers are held accountable, promote transparency and begin the process of rebuilding trust between communities and the police sworn to protect them.

We are not against law enforcement; we are against bad policing and bad cops who should not be wearing the uniform. We understand completely how dangerous and difficult the job is but with great power comes great responsibility; and where there is great power, there's an acute need to make sure that power is not abused.

The law enforcement reform bills the Legislature passed this month are only the first steps, and there's still so much more important work that needs to be done.

Speaker Heastie Leads the Repeal of 50-A

New law will shine light on police disciplinary records

Lead by Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, the Legislature repealed section 50-a of the state Civil Rights Law, which prevented disclosure of law enforcement disciplinary records. This law has allowed too many police with a history of misconduct to go undetected until their behavior ended in tragedy. Too many lives have been lost and this law was long overdue. Now these records are subject to the state Freedom of Information Law (FOIL), just like all other public agency records.

Holding Police Officers Accountable for Their Actions

The Assembly passed new legislation to affirm the right of a person, unless they're under arrest or in custody, to record law enforcement activity and maintain custody and control of the recording. This new policy will make sure that bad cops can't cover their crimes. Also, this law provides for a private right of action for claims of unlawful interference with recording a law enforcement officer (A.1360-A).

The Assembly passed a new law that provides body-worn cameras to all state police officers while on patrol and, when a body-worn camera must be used, stipulates the preservation of body camera footage and maintenance of the camera. This law also allows the attorney general to investigate instances where body cameras fail to record (A.8674-A).

Calling out the Injustices of Profiling and Bias



Speaker Heastie and community leader Kevin Riley give greeting to the community at our annual Juneteenth event.

Assemblyman Heastie negotiated a new law that establishes a civil right of action for individuals under the Civil Rights Law when a person, motivated by bias, calls 911 or otherwise summons a police officer when there is no reason to believe a crime is occurring. The cause of action would arise when the caller acted based on a belief or perception regarding the race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, religion, religious practice, age, disability or sexual orientation of another person (A.1531-B). This law would provide a remedy for the bird-watching man who was harassed by the woman walking her dog in Central Park, threatening him that she would call the police for no reason other than he was Black.

New Law Bans the Use of Choke Holds by Police Officers

Speaker Heastie led the push to create a new crime of aggravated strangulation, a class C felony, when without other emergency legal justification, a law enforcement officer uses a chokehold or similar restraint against a person and thereby causes serious physical injury or death to such person (A.6144-B).

Maintaining Demographic Records to Combat Prejudice

The Assembly enacted the Police Statistics and Transparency (STAT) Act to hold law enforcement accountable to the public by publishing demographic data of New Yorkers who are prosecuted for low-level crimes. This law requires courts to maintain and report information, including aggregate and anonymized demographic information such as race, ethnicity and sex, concerning arrests and court proceedings involving lower-level offenses, such as violations and traffic offenses (A.10609).

Establishing Offices to Oversee Police Actions

A.1601-C: Establishes an Office of Special Investigation within the Office of the Attorney General to investigate and, when warranted, prosecute incidents involving the wrongful death of a person caused by a police officer or by certain peace officers. The special prosecutor's office would act in place of the district attorney and be empowered to obtain an indictment against the officer when warranted and bring the criminal case to trial. Requires the special prosecutor's office to issue public reports in cases where the prosecutor declines to present evidence to a grand jury or the grand jury declines to approve charges.

A.1002-B: Establishes the Law Enforcement Misconduct Investigative Office within the Department of Law headed by a Deputy Attorney General to receive and investigate complaints from any source or on their own initiative concerning allegations of corruption, fraud, use of excessive force, criminal activity, conflicts of interest or abuse in a local law enforcement agency.

Emergency Rent Relief Act

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges for families here in New York and across the nation, and our communities are hurting. Businesses were forced to close their doors to the public, leaving millions of New Yorkers without jobs

or furloughed since the pandemic began. Countless New Yorkers cannot pay their bills and struggle to put food on the table, let alone make rent payments.

To better support renters across the state who have lost jobs and income due to COVID-19, Assemblyman Heastie led the push to pass the Emergency Rent Relief Act of 2020 (A.10522). This new law will create a short-term rental assistance program for renters whose income was less than 80% of the area median income (AMI) and spent more than 30% of their income on rent prior to March 7.

Assistance would be made available for rent payments due between April 1, 2020, and July 31, 2020. This program will use up to \$100 million from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020, and vouchers would be paid directly to landlords of applicants deemed eligible. Renters approved for the program would not be expected or required to pay back the financial assistance provided.

Preference would be given to households with the greatest economic and social needs, with factors such as income, rent burden, percentage of income loss and risk of homelessness taken into consideration.

YOU can ensure the Bronx gets its fair share, but only if you get Counted!

You can still get counted! There is a lot riding on your response.

Because of COVID-19, the deadline to respond to the Census has been extended to October 31st.

You can respond online, by phone or through the mail.

All personal information provided is confidential.

Go to my2020census.gov
or call 844-330-2020



New York State Assembly, Albany, New York 12248

PRSR STD.
US Postage
PAID
Albany, NY
Permit No. 75



NEWS FROM

Speaker
Carl E. Heastie

"In the wake of the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and the continued financial hardship caused by COVID-19, the Assembly Majority and I acted swiftly to hold bad police officers accountable and provide much-needed relief to New York renters during these incredibly difficult times."

– Assemblyman Carl E. Heastie



Speaker Heastie joins law enforcement activists, Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Governor Cuomo as police reforms are signed into law.