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March 17, 2022

Dear Friends,

Across the globe in Ukraine, we today are witnessing horrible events that are reminiscent of the days in advance of World War II. Invasion of a sovereign nation, the intentional targeting of civilians and war crimes remind us that evil exists.

At the same time the Ukrainian people have reminded the world that people will continue to fight for the idea of the value of freedom and democracy. In recent years dictators have proclaimed that autocracy is the more efficient way of the future, that democracy is an old-fashioned relic that does not work. The dictators have challenged our belief that, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

The Ukrainian people have given their answer and reminded the world that when people are given the choice, they choose democracy over tyranny. Their response has inspired us all and reaffirmed the goals we aspire to as a people.

This newsletter includes ways you can help the people of Ukraine. Following Russia's unprovoked attack, Governor Kathy Hochul directed all New York State agencies and authorities to review and divest public funds from Russia.

The latest news in the state budget is adoption of the Assembly and Senate one-house budget proposals that become the basis for three-way negotiations with the governor towards approval of a state budget for the fiscal year starting April 1.

More budget updates will follow. I am pleased to report that a number of initiatives I have personally championed are included in the Assembly budget proposal. These include significant increases in funding for education, more relief for families and businesses still recovering from Covid, electric vehicle rollout, rent assistance, pay for home health care workers, environmental programs and tax cuts.

The Assembly budget includes my proposals on digital inclusion grants,

stormwater infrastructure funding for local governments, continued major investment in clean water programs, storm damage assistance for costs not covered by other programs and additional assistance to local governments and libraries.

This newsletter includes:

- Help for Ukraine
- Home Utility Cost Crisis
- New Legislation Deems EMS an Essential Service
- Additional Funding for SNAP
- Interview with Joe Marino
- Assembly Hearing on EV Charging Stations
- Vaccine Finder

As always, please contact me on any issue on which I can be of assistance. Please call my District Office at 914-939-7028.

Warm regards,



Help for Ukraine

[International Rescue Committee](#)

[World Central Kitchen](#)

[Save the Children](#)

[International Committee For the Red Cross](#)

[UNICEF USA](#)

[UN Refugee Agency](#)

[Volunteer NY](#)

A Crisis in Energy Costs: Information and Resources

We have all been hit by shocking increases in utility costs. These bill increases are being driven by a global increase in natural gas commodity prices due to higher domestic usage because of colder-than-normal weather, increased economic activity, and increased international demand for natural gas.

While we can all understand that natural gas prices have risen dramatically, the lack of notice, anticipation of increases or an ability to cushion the blow through phasing in the impact of commodity price fluctuations all need further review. I am working with others within the legislature and state government to protect consumers. Our Assembly one-house budget proposal includes funding to help address utility bill arrears.

In February the NYS Public Service Commission sent a letter to Con Edison, the state's largest utility, urging it to review its billing practices and better communicate with its customers. The PSC has asked all utilities to review their procedures. Con Edison responded and said it will adjust its billing process to reduce the likelihood of significant customer bill volatility in the future. Con Edison also said it would improve its communication with electric and gas customers. This week the PSC issued an update on their outreach to utility companies which you can view [HERE](#).

I encourage you to reach out to the Attorney General Tish James' office if your bill was unusually high and share your personal experience. The AG's office can be reached by filling out the contact form found [HERE](#) or calling the general helpline at 1-800-771-7755.

Public Hearings on Requested Rate Hikes

On January 28th ConEd filed an application with the PSC for electric and gas rate increases to take effect January 1, 2023.

The PSC will hold a series of virtual public statement hearings on March 22, 29, and 31, 2022, to solicit input and comments from the public regarding the filing. Any person wishing to provide a public statement must pre-register by 4:30 p.m. on the day before the hearing you wish to attend.

Information about this application can be found on the PSC website at [Con Edison filed amendments](#) with additional information on how you can submit testimony or written comments can be found on their hearing notice here: [PSC Hearing Notice](#)

New Legislation Introduced to Deem EMS As Essential and Address Chronic EMT Shortage



Wednesday morning I joined Sen. Shelley Mayer, Rye Brook Village Administrator, Chris Bradbury, Westchester County Department of Emergency Services Commissioner Richard Wishnie and the team at the Port Chester - Rye - Rye Brook EMS to support our legislation ([A.9509](#)) to expand benefits for EMS programs around the state. There are staffing shortages for these services. If we are going to attract and retain the staff support we need to provide sufficient emergency medical response services in a timely fashion, these programs need to be treated in the same way as other emergency services.



\$230 Million in Additional Food Assistance for New Yorkers in February

Governor Kathy Hochul announced that all New Yorkers enrolled in the

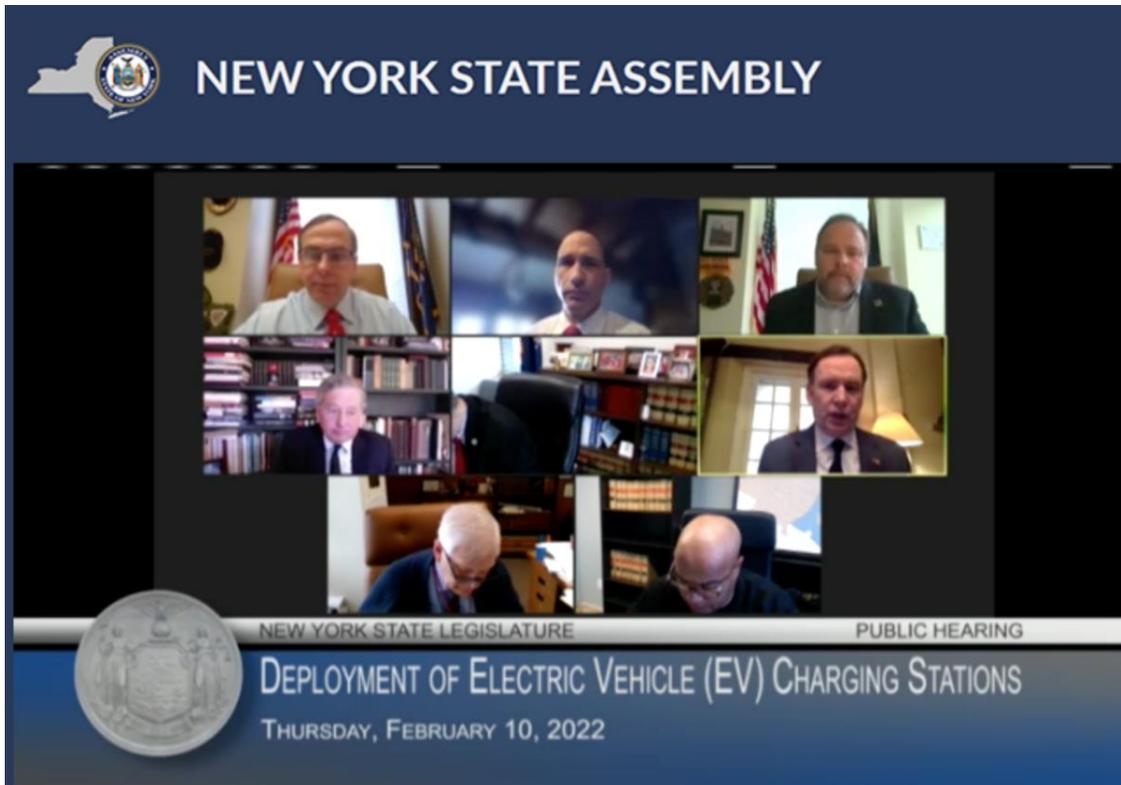
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will receive the maximum allowable level of food benefits for February. All households participating in SNAP—including those already at the maximum level of benefits—will receive a supplemental allotment later this month, bringing in roughly \$230 million in federal funding into the state's economy.

Find more information on the emergency supplemental SNAP benefits, including answers to frequently asked questions, [here](#). New Yorkers can check their eligibility for SNAP and apply online by visiting mybenefits.ny.gov.



I sat down the John Marino to discuss the budget process and some of my priorities including digital inclusion, storm water projects, redistricting etc...

Interview on where we are with the budget process with John Marino can be viewed [HERE](#).



Assembly Hearing on EV Charging Stations

On February 10th I co-chaired a legislative hearing on the rollout of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations across the state and the need to deploy a greater number of them to accommodate an increasing demand for electric cars. A portion of that hearing can be viewed [HERE](#).



Am I eligible to Free File My Taxes?

You may e-file your federal and New York State income tax returns at no cost if your 2021 income is \$73,000 or less. Learn more here:

<https://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/efile/>

If you earned more than \$73,000 in 2021, see [Other e-file options](#) to learn about your electronic filing options.



COVID-19 Vaccine: Safe, Effective, Free

Make an appointment at a NYS-operated vaccination site or find other vaccine locations near you.

[Vaccine Finder](#)

Young New Yorkers Are Encouraged to Get Vaccinated

The COVID-19 vaccine is safe, effective and will help protect eligible children and adolescents ages 5 – 17.

[Get The Facts](#)

[#VaxForKids Pop Up Sites](#)

