



Dear Friends,

We're back! With the November election behind us, our blackout period is now over, and today marks the resumption of my Assembly newsletter.

Serving as your Assemblymember has been one of the most rewarding jobs I have ever had. **I am honored that I will have the opportunity to represent the 93rd Assembly District for two more years.** Let me take this opportunity to remind everyone that you should never hesitate to reach out to my office if there are any issues, concerns, or thoughts you would like to share.

Hearing from you allows me to do my job better.

Unfortunately, I must start this newsletter on a somber note. **The mass shooting at the LGBTQ Club in Colorado Springs this past weekend is nothing short of devastating.** Particularly heartbreaking is that yesterday was **Transgender Day of Remembrance**, a day to shine a spotlight on the violence and discrimination that transgender people have endured and continue to endure.

According to the Human Rights Campaign, **at least 32 transgender and gender-nonconforming people have been killed in the United States this year alone.** Since 2013, the year the FBI began tracking hate crimes against the transgender community, the HRC has documented at least 302 violent deaths of transgender and nonconforming individuals.

Transgender people of color account for 81 percent of known victims this year.

The events of this past weekend painfully highlight the reason why we need to continue to recognize days like Transgender Day of Remembrance. **Because only when we come together, and recognize that this kind of violence and discrimination continues to exist in our society, can we take the steps to address it.** And address it we must.

Circling back to a topic in my [last newsletter](#), **I mentioned I would be holding a series of Coffee & Conversations throughout the district.** So far, we have held them in Bedford, White Plains, Lewisboro, Mount Kisco, Pound Ridge and New Castle (I also attended the monthly North White Plains meetup hosted by Deputy Town Supervisor Barbara DiGiacinto). **If we haven't yet held a Coffee & Conversation in your municipality, please stay tuned!** We will be visiting the remaining municipalities over the next few months and will keep you posted on the dates.



Finally, it is hard to believe, but Thanksgiving is upon us. **Let me take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very happy and healthy Thanksgiving.**



Honoring Our Veterans & Elevating Veterans Services

In honor of Veterans Day, I had the opportunity to participate in four ceremonies the week before last.

The first was the County's Veterans Day ceremony, scheduled on Wednesday, November 9th so as not to conflict with local town events. The County's ceremony was very moving with remarks from, among others, County Executive George Latimer, Veterans Affairs Director Ron Tocci, and newly installed Commander of the American Legion Department of New York, David R. Riley, Sr.

Mr. Riley emphasized the need to let the community know about the emergency number 988, to provide help for veterans who are in despair and considering taking their own life. As he said, better to call 988 than needing to call 911 for a tragic event. Please do keep this in mind if you know of a veteran who is struggling.



On Veterans Day itself, I attended a breakfast in Lewisboro at the South Salem Fire Department, hosted by the Scouts, where I was delighted to greet each veteran and thank them for their service. Harrison dodged the rain for a short parade to the West Harrison Village Green, where the ceremony was held. North Castle held its ceremony at American Legion Post 1097.



In each town, the community came out in force to honor the service and sacrifices the veterans have made for their country.

I am privileged to serve as a member of the Assembly Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and was so pleased that – as part of this year's budget – **the legislature elevated the NYS Division of Veterans' Services to a full department, beginning on April 23, 2023.** This change highlights the importance of, and our respect for, veterans and their service.

With this elevation, veterans service programs will now be consolidated for one-stop access, eliminating confusion and frustration, and helping to make these programs more readily accessible to veterans and their families. This change may also lead to additional federal funds being available to New York for veterans services. Please stay tuned for additional information on these upcoming changes. In the meantime, I'd like to take this opportunity to once again thank our veterans for their bravery and sacrifice.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, a time to shine a spotlight on the successes, obstacles, and barriers to employment for those with disabilities. As we were not able to include this in a newsletter last month, we wanted to make sure we recognized NDEAM now.

Since taking office in January 2021, and becoming Chair of the Assembly Subcommittee on Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities, **I have learned that are so many people in the disability community with the ability and desire to work, who simply cannot.** Some don't have access to transportation. Some don't have reliable care due to the low wages caregivers receive. Some have difficulty getting the training that they need. Many simply can't find opportunities. There are so many obstacles standing between them and paying jobs.

As I have mentioned [previously](#), in October 2021 the Assembly Committee on People with Disabilities held a public hearing to examine the availability of employment opportunities for people with disabilities, with a specific focus on the availability of services to assist individuals in accessing employment. **The hearing lasted about 10 hours and many of those who testified told me that this was the first time they felt like their voices were being heard.**

Out of that hearing, my colleagues and I put together a package of bills. **Two of my bills that were included in that package, and were passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, were recently signed into law by Governor Hochul.** One modernizes the preferred source provisions of state law to help incentivize companies competing for state agency contracts to employ more people with disabilities. The other is a proposal to create a pilot program for best hiring, training, and employment practices for for-profit and nonprofit firms.

Last month at their annual awards ceremony, I was honored to be recognized – along with NYS Senator John Mannion – as a legislative champion by the [New York State Industries for the Disabled](#). In accepting the award, I made clear that while I am so pleased about the recent progress, this is not the end of the journey. It is just a first step.



We still have a long way to go, as there is so much more we can, and must, achieve.

New Volleyball Courts in Mount Kisco's Leonard Park

What a wonderful day it was late last month at the ribbon cutting for the new volleyball courts at Leonard Park in Mount Kisco. The project came about due to the advocacy and collaboration of Mount Kisco Mayor Gina Picinch, the Latino and Italian American communities, and most especially due to the advocacy of Mount Kisco Trustee Karine Patiño, who launched the effort even before she was elected.

The court is designed for not only the playing of conventional volleyball, but Ecuavoley, a form of volleyball that originated in Ecuador and is popular among many in town. The sport is played with a higher net, harder ball, and only three players

It was an amazing event, joyous and community-building, with members of Legado Latino and the Italian American Club of Northern Westchester in attendance. It was an honor to be on hand, and I was pleased that I could help by securing a New York State capital grant toward project costs (and my thanks to Legado Latino for presenting me with an award in recognition of that support!)



Celebrating the Opening of Lilac House

It was an honor to join in the soft opening earlier this month of [The Lilac House](#) in Mount Vernon, which will become the home for up to seven women upon completing their sentences at the Bedford Hills and Taconic Correctional Facilities. Rather than facing the possibility of ending up in a homeless shelter, they will have a fresh start for a new life.

The Lilac House is the accomplishment of Pamela Zimba, an amazing woman who serves on my Correction Advisory Committee. While in prison, she completed her Associates Degree through the Bard Prison Initiative, and then secured an internship at the Ford Foundation after she was released, where she now works full-time. **It took Pamela years to get back on her feet and now, knowing how hard it was, she is committed to providing safe, supportive housing for other women when they leave prison to help them get back on their feet as well.**

Pamela was trained by Susan Burton, also formerly incarcerated, who started "A New Way of Life" and has opened twenty-three houses around the US and in three countries. She helped Pamela purchase The Lilac House and turn it into a home where women can gently re-enter society in a welcoming and supportive environment. Pamela and Susan are not only paying it forward but are also helping to reduce the recidivism rate by giving more women the chance to become contributing members of society.



Raised Income Eligibility: Westchester Works Child Care Scholarship

Reminder! As a result of recent raises in income eligibility, **paying for child care via the Westchester Works Child Care Scholarship is now available to more Westchester families than ever!** Examples of the new income eligibility are listed in the graphic below:



Now Available

Westchester Works Child Care Scholarship

Scholarships are not just for college!

**You may be eligible for help to make
quality child care more affordable**

If you earn up to:

- \$73,240 for a family of 2
- \$92,120 for a family of 3
- \$111,000 for a family of 4

Learn more and apply today

914-761-3456 x140

Scholarships@cccwny.org

www.childcarewestchester.org

[Westchester
gov.com](http://Westchester.gov.com) **George Latimer**
Westchester County Executive



Parents must reside in Westchester and usually must be employed, but job search activities may qualify.

For more information, contact the Child Care Council of Westchester. They can also help you find child/afterschool care. Call the Council at (914) 761-3456 x 140 today.

[WEDC Marketplace Open Through November 27th](#)

The [Women's Development Enterprise Center](#) Marketplace is open through November 27th in Mount Kisco, where they are showcasing a variety of small businesses' products and services.

For those of you who are not familiar with the organization, WEDC opens doors to business ownership for low-to-moderate income women and minorities in Westchester and the Hudson Valley. They offer programs and services such as **comprehensive business training programs, workshops, individualized counseling, networking events, and assistance with MWBE certifications and loan applications.** WEDC helps start-up companies as well as established businesses to grow and succeed.

WEDC also serves specialized populations including mature adults 50+, child care providers, survivors of domestic violence, veterans, and dislocated workers.

Please consider stopping by, shopping, and supporting these wonderful entrepreneurs!



**COME VISIT THE
WEDC MARKETPLACE!**

**Wednesday through Sunday
11.2 to 11.27
10 am to 6 pm
23 East Main Street, Mt. Kisco**



**WEDC WILL SHOWCASE A VARIETY OF
SMALL BUSINESSES' PRODUCTS AND
SERVICES. WE INVITE YOU TO SHOP
AND SUPPORT THESE AMAZING
ENTREPRENEURS.**

www.wedcbiz.org/events

Office of Strategic Workforce Development Launches Workforce Development Grants

\$150 million in workforce development grants are available now for businesses in our region. They were launched in mid-October and are administered by the newly formed Office of Strategic Workforce Development at Empire State Development. The \$115 million Pay for Performance Grant Program and the \$35 million Workforce Development Capital Grant Program are designed to meet New York State's workforce needs, increase the capacity of workforce training providers, and position New Yorkers to fill high-quality, in-demand jobs.

More information about these grant programs, including who is eligible and how to apply, can be found on the Empire State Development [website](#).



Thank You Jared!

Finally, **this past March, I was contacted by 14-year-old New Castle resident Jared Saiontz with a request.** As a sufferer of 26 life-threatening food allergies, **Jared requested that we recognize May 8-14, 2022 as Food Allergy Awareness Week.** Because of this request, I introduced a resolution to the New York State Assembly in recognition of Food Allergy Awareness Week and invited Jared and his family up to Albany when it passed on the Assembly floor.

Recently, I was able to give him a hard copy of the resolution and also present him with a citation recognizing not only his initiative in reaching out to me about Food Allergy Awareness Week, but his many contributions to food allergy awareness, including initiating a multi-month project to collect foods free of common allergens for donation to the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry, as well as bringing about the installation of 10 new signs at New Castle playgrounds that lay out allergy-safe protocols for outdoor dining, making the playgrounds safe for children with severe allergies to enjoy. He is now working to help other food pantries to incorporate allergen-free foods in their offerings as well.



At a young age, Jared has accomplished so much already. **I look forward to watching everything he will achieve in the future!**

Again, **please do not hesitate to reach out to my office with any questions or if there is any assistance we can provide.** You can always reach me at burdickc@nyassembly.gov or by calling (914) 244-4450. My staff and I are always ready to help. Please also follow me on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) for continued up-to-date information.

Miss any of our previous newsletters? You can [find them here](#).

Sincerely yours,



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