



# Assemblyman Ken Zebrowski



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Dear Neighbor:

As we enter the winter and holiday season, I know this continues to be a difficult time in so many ways. Individuals, families, essential workers and businesses face a variety of challenges. I pledge to continue to collaborate and advocate on behalf of Rockland County to ensure your collective concerns and suggestions are heard on the State level.

This newsletter gives an update on a variety of issues in New York and Rockland County. Please continue to contact me with your thoughts, ideas and concerns.

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season and a cheerful and healthy New Year.

Sincerely,

Assemblyman  
Ken Zebrowski

## Continuing to Fight the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect our lives and community in so many ways. As this newsletter went to print, the dynamics are constantly changing. Unfortunately, after several months of stable numbers, infections are on the rise in both Rockland County and New York State. Governor Cuomo and the State Health Department continue to institute new measures to attempt to decrease the spread.

Ken will continue to do everything possible to help combat this public health crisis. His priorities remain: follow the science, foster vaccine and treatment development, utilize a targeted approach for public health directives that reduce the spread while protecting the economy, target the riskiest actions with real enforcement, protect businesses and schools and give them the guidelines and tools necessary to operate safely; maximize resources and do everything possible to protect essential and health care workers who are on the front lines.

Assemblyman Zebrowski also knows residents have fears that extend beyond the health implications. There are concerns about the economy, jobs, schools, childcare, mental and emotional health, childhood development etc. These are real issues that Government needs to address and balance. Throughout this crisis, Ken has worked with residents, businesses, schools, hospitals and local governments on a variety of issues, both personal and statewide. Hopefully there is a light at the end of the tunnel with positive news of medical advancements. However, as we attempt to navigate the winter, Ken will continue to collaborate and advocate for State policies that protect public health and preserve our social, emotional and economic well-being.

## Distributing Hand Sanitizer to the Community

- Right in the thick of the pandemic, Assemblyman Zebrowski and his team personally hand delivered hundreds of gallons of New York State Clean hand sanitizer to small businesses and nonprofits across the County as we began to open back up.
- In addition, Assemblyman Zebrowski and Senator Skoufis held a hand sanitizer and mask distribution over the summer at the Village of Haverstraw Farmers Market. Residents were able to stop by to receive free sanitizer and masks courtesy of the State.
- Lastly, Ken held a Back-to-School Teacher Hand Sanitizer distribution to assist our teachers as they navigated going back to school in the middle of a pandemic. Teachers were welcome to stop by the district office to pick up a free gallon of sanitizer - which ran out in almost 20 minutes! In order to meet the demand



of the hundreds of teachers who signed up for sanitizer, Assemblyman Zebrowski drove a truck up to Albany to secure hundreds of hand sanitizers for educators in his district. Ken and his team then broke down the gallon sized bottles in quarts so that the over 400 teachers that signed up for sanitizer could receive it. Our office still has some hand sanitizer, if you need some for a business, school or other group activity, please contact us at zebrowskik@nyassembly.gov.

# MTA Threatens to Eliminate West of Hudson Train Service

The MTA met during the summer and due to their dire financial outlook is considering, among other cuts, to eliminate West of Hudson train service. They indicated that without federal assistance, they would be forced to consider a host of draconian cuts across the system. This proposal would decimate our local economy and Assemblyman Zebrowski has pledged to not only fight it, but to pass legislation pulling Rockland out of the MTA if this proposal moves forward.

## Collaborating with Rockland School Districts

This pandemic has put a tremendous burden on students, parents, teachers and administrators. Since the spring, Assemblyman Zebrowski has been advocating to:

- Prevent mid-year cuts to State Aid
- Provide additional resources and regulatory relief to deal with increased costs
- Provide logistical assistance to schools to help them open and remain safe.

He is also in regular contact with school board members, superintendents and teachers providing a direct line of communication with State Health and Education Department Officials.

## Continuing the Fight for East Ramapo Students

For over a decade, Assemblyman Zebrowski has been a champion for the students of the East Ramapo Central School District. Ken has worked tirelessly to ensure every student gets the fair and equitable education they deserve. Although there's been significant progress in moving the district forward, there is still work to be done and Assemblyman Zebrowski remains committed to this fight.

### Recent East Ramapo Developments:

#### Connecting East Ramapo Students with Necessary Technology for Remote Learning.

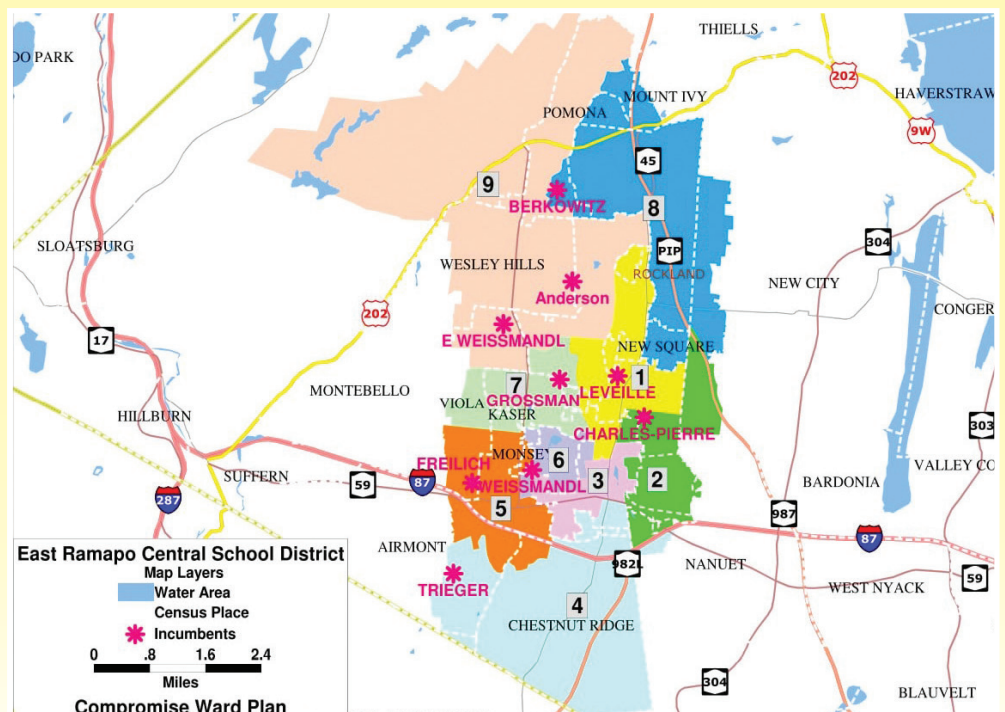
Most Rockland County School Districts met an enormous challenge by setting up a remote learning system amid the pandemic. There were students in all districts that had logistical issues with computer and internet access and reports suggest that most districts have provided universal access for students who needed it. A recent report, however, showed that 47% of East Ramapo students were chronically absent due to technology gaps. Ken immediately contacted the State Department of Education and got on the phone with the new Superintendent in East Ramapo. Superintendent Raymond Giamartino, who had only been there a couple weeks, cancelled all prior orders that were delayed and worked directly with Dell to procure 5,224 chromebooks and T-Mobile to supply hotspots within 2 weeks.

#### Judge Orders East Ramapo to Create Wards/Districts to Provide Better Representation

Every student in Rockland deserves an excellent education, and every parent deserves to be represented and heard by our school boards.

For years, Ken has been fighting for accountability and transparency in East Ramapo, and this year a victory was delivered by the Courts. The NAACP secured a big win when a federal court ruled that the current district election system was discriminatory and prevented minority public school parents from having representation on the school board. As a result of this decision, East Ramapo was ordered to change from an election system where all school board members run in the full district, to a system where school board members are elected from individual wards/districts. This will ensure a more diverse board that better represents every student in East Ramapo.

In the new term, Ken will continue to seek oversight and broad governance changes.





## Zebrowski Introduces Legislation to Allow any Rockland School District to Choose a Ward Based System

While a Judge recently ordered East Ramapo to institute a ward system; New York State law does not allow other schools districts to institute wards. Assemblyman Zebrowski believes every district should have the option of switching to this type of system if it could provide better representation to residents. That is why he introduced A.10992 which would allow all Rockland School Districts this option.



## The FYI Section

*Here are a few important things you should be aware of:*

### ■ SUEZ

My office was recently contacted by the NYS Department of Public Service (PSC) and the NYS Department of Health (DOH) regarding elevated levels of the drinking water contaminant PFOA in 12 of 61 Suez wells in Rockland County. SUEZ also sent out notices to customers. The levels average 11-15 parts per trillion, with the highest well at 19 parts per trillion. New NYS regulations required testing of PFOA and set the level at 10 parts per trillion, far below the EPA health advisory level of 70. These new regulations are designed to mandate remediation BEFORE there could be health effects. Assemblyman Zebrowski has pledged to stay on top of the remediation and ensure State health and environmental experts are monitoring the situation and advising residents if they should be taking any steps to protect themselves. At this point, health experts have said the levels are low enough that no action is necessary by SUEZ customers.

### ■ CASHLESS TOLLING

Although various portions of the Thruway in Rockland have already been cashless for some time, the entire 570 mile Thruway system statewide moved to an entirely cashless system on November 14th. If you have an E-ZPass, nothing will change. If not, instead of paying at a toll booth, you will receive a bill approximately 30 to 40 days after going through the toll.

My office has worked with numerous constituents over the years on astronomical late fees and fines. If you receive a bill, please do not ignore it. If there is a mistake my office will try and help or you can call E-ZPass directly. If you don't want to wait to receive a bill in the mail, you can visit [www.tollsmailny.com](http://www.tollsmailny.com) and search by license plate to see and pay your toll fees immediately.

### ■ DMV

COVID extensions for vehicle inspection and registration have now expired. Did you know that you can conduct a number of transactions online? In order to avoid the delay in appointment schedules, you can use the DMV website or a remote kiosk to renew a driver's license, renew a registration, request DMV records or request an address change. Rockland also has a couple remote kiosks that can be used for certain transactions: ShopRite at 66 N. Main Street, New City from 7AM-10PM; ShopRite at 250 Route 59, Tallman from 7AM-10PM. For up to date status of DMV transactions, please contact our office or visit [www.dmv.ny.gov](http://www.dmv.ny.gov).

### ■ SEAT BELTS

The NYS Backseat Seat Belt Law took effect on Sunday November 1st. This new law requires everyone in the car to wear a seat belt; adding those above 16 who are riding in the back seat. According to AAA, passengers in the back seat that are unbuckled are twice as likely to be killed and eight times as likely to be seriously injured if flung forward in an accident compared to those that are wearing seat belts.



Assemblyman Zebrowski speaks in support of organ donation with Senator Carlucci and local advocates.

## Protecting Homeowners and Small Businesses from Corporate Tax Challenges

Some of the biggest threats to property taxpayers are big corporations that file lawsuits which shift taxes onto homeowners and small businesses. Property taxes are a burden on everyone, and lawyers should not be able to use loopholes to unfairly devalue a property at the expense of everyone else. There is a concerning trend happening in NY as lawyers use the value of a vacant commercial property in order to lower the taxes of an open and functional property. Working with the NYS Assessors Association, Ken's legislation that passed the Assembly this year sets common sense rules for property valuation so that taxes aren't unfairly shifted onto the backs of homeowners and other small businesses (A4752-C).

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## Standing Up for Domestic Violence Survivors

For years, Assemblyman Zebrowski has stood up for survivors of domestic violence. He has authored several bills that are now NYS law aimed at protecting our communities' most vulnerable. Ken works alongside Rockland's nonprofits like the Center for Safety & Change and advocates to help spur change right in Rockland and throughout the entire State.

Last year, Ken's bill was signed into law by the Governor that allows domestic violence survivors to report an incident of abuse to any law enforcement agency in New York State. Previously, survivors could only report to the police who have jurisdiction over that area. This was incredibly problematic and forced survivors who may have fled to return to the location of the abuse (A4467A) Ken has also introduced and passed legislation that doubles the amount of time survivors of domestic abuse have to initiate a civil suit for damages stemming from abuse. Previously, individuals had to take action within one year of the incident, and after speaking with survivors and taking into consideration the emotional factors of domestic abuse, Assemblyman Zebrowski passed this bill into law that affords survivors another year (A1945).