



As we approach the end of the 2022 legislative session, I wanted to update you on what I've accomplished this year to improve our community. Recently, I attended community events to hear firsthand from residents about the issues that matter most to them. After connecting with local business owners and speaking with seniors and local students, I passed legislation and secured funding in the 2022-23 state budget for programs that support the people of Colonie, Niskayuna and Schenectady. Furthermore, in honor of Memorial Day, I joined the community in honoring the brave men and women that gave their lives for this country. If you have any questions or concerns regarding any community issue, please don't hesitate to contact my office at 518-377-0902 or SteckP@nyassembly.gov.

All the Best,
Phil Steck

Legislative Updates



New Gun Modification Bill

Since the devastating mass shooting last Tuesday in Uvalde, TX and Buffalo the Saturday before, there have been 17 more mass shootings that did not make the news. This is unacceptable in a peaceful society. Until the federal government acts to protect its citizens, New York State must act to protect its own. This last week of session we plan to do just that. We must stop these senseless acts of hate and extreme violence.

The mass shootings in Uvalde, Buffalo, Las Vegas, Houston and Sacramento, just to name a few, were all committed with a modified firearm. The Buffalo event

involved the addition of a high capacity magazine, illegal in New York state, but bought 10 minutes away in Pennsylvania and added by an 18 year-old simply by drilling a hopple into his legally purchased AR-15, turning it into a gun that is illegal in our state. Another lethal modification is the addition of a rapid fire device to a semi-automatic weapon which transforms it into a fully automatic weapon capable of spraying hundreds of rounds in a minute. For the past two months, my office has been drafting legislation to require gun manufacturers to make their weapons incompatible with these devices. We recently filed this legislation; unfortunately that filing coincided with the horrific events in Buffalo last Saturday. New York state has some of the strongest gun safety laws in the country, however a simple google search renders them ineffective – because the directions on how to modify your weapon are online.

Supporting Niskayuna Police Officers

I sponsored and passed a bill allowing four Niskayuna police officers to join the correct retirement plan after they were placed in a default retirement plan rather than the optional plan selected by most police officers. This plan provides full retirement benefits after either 20 or 25 years of service, regardless of age. Previously, the Retirement and Social Security Law was amended, changing the default plan so that all police officer retirement plans are based on 20 or 25 years of service. Unfortunately, these four officers entered service long before the law was amended, leaving them on the previous default plan. During their time on the force, these officers have worked day in and day out to protect and serve our community, so it is only right that they are able to take advantage of the new default retirement plan.

Elimination of the Electronic Death Registry Tax

Finally, I sponsored and passed legislation to remove the \$20 fee required to be collected by New York State for each burial, removal or transfer permit issued on and after September 27, 2013. In 2013, New York State enacted a law to establish an electronic death registration system (EDRS) to collect, store, record, transmit, amend, correct and authenticate state death information.

At the time, funeral directors agreed to pay a \$20 fee for each burial and removal permit issued to support the implementation of an EDRS system. However, these funeral directors are paying the same fee nearly ten years later, despite New York's EDRS system being fully operational and it's time we remove this now unnecessary fee. This legislation will repeal the \$20 EDRS fee, relieving our state's funeral homes of this financial burden.

Pushing for Support for Co-Occurring Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disorders

We introduced legislation to address a significant issue in substance abuse treatment: co-occurring disorders. Oftentimes, people successfully complete drug treatment programs, but subsequently are derailed from their recovery because there was no treatment for an underlying mental health disorder. Our legislation would take the 14 state-run 30-day residential drug treatment facilities and infuse them with qualified providers who can diagnose and treat mental health disorders. It seems like such a simple, common sense solution, but has run afoul of entrenched bureaucracies (Office Of Mental Health and the Office of Addiction

Services and Supports) and their supporters in the legislature who want to preserve silo-ing of services. Nonetheless, we will continue to work toward reform of the drug treatment system.

In The Community

Schenectady Community Action Program Grant

I was honored to present Schenectady's Community Action Program (SCAP) with a \$25,000 grant that I secured to support the Sojourn House, which provides transitional housing for women and children who are experiencing homelessness. SCAP has served the Schenectady community since 1965 offering front-line assistance to families in crisis. Helping nearly 12,000 people a year, SCAP supports and empowers people to build on their resources so they may eventually rise out of poverty and become self-supporting. Sojourn House is a transitional housing program staffed 24/7 for women with children and pregnant women who are experiencing homelessness. During this time of financial hardship for so many of our community members, the Sojourn House helps meet immediate needs for food, clothing, medication, transportation and childcare, particularly for women and children struggling with homelessness.



Debra Schimpf, CEO of SCAP, along with Sojourn House staff and board members receiving a ceremonial check from Assemblymember Phil Steck.

Lansing's Farm Market Named to New York State's Historic Preservation Business Registry

I was delighted to see that after nominating Lansing's Farm Market to the Historic Preservation Business Registry, they were chosen to be one of the first 100 designees to receive the honor. Lansing's Farm Market, which is family owned and operated since 1778, grows fresh fruit, vegetables, herbs and a wide variety of flowers, all while creating a sense of community in Colonie. The new program is

administered by the Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, and highlights businesses that have been in operation for at least 50 years and have contributed to their communities' history. Designation is gained through nomination by a New York State senator or assemblymember and is intended to highlight and promote long-running businesses.



Patrick Lansing and Al Lansing accepting a certificate from the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation from Assemblymember Phil Steck.

\$150,000 Secured for Colonie Seniors' Transportation Vehicles

I had a great time at the Colonie Senior Center's Mother's Day Fashion Show this month where I had the privilege of announcing that we secured \$150,000 in funding for new senior transportation vehicles. I will continue to fight to provide our seniors with the resources they need to thrive.

"I am a senior citizen residing in the town of Colonie," said Carol P. of Watervliet. "I rely on Colonie senior transportation and would be lost without them. A great big thank you for securing \$150,000 for Colonie Senior Service Centers to purchase two new transportation vehicles. Thank you for thinking about us seniors and for your concern."



Honoring Eagle Scouts and Meeting with Boy Scouts

Four local high schoolers received the highest honor a Boy Scout can receive when they were sworn in as Eagle Scouts. I was honored to be invited to the ceremony at the Hangar at 743 in Latham. To receive an Eagle Scout Badge, Scouts must complete a strict set of requirements in areas of leadership, service, and outdoor skills. Less than 10% of all Scouts in the United States reach this rank. The four individuals who received this honor (pictured seated from left to right): Luke Zito, Grant Rinckey, Kevin Tully, and Sean Meek have committed themselves to the Boy Scouts of America and have dedicated countless hours to the mission of this organization to better themselves as citizens of the Capital Region.

I also met with a local Boy Scout troop to discuss state government and how to make a difference in our community. I was so impressed by their commitment to scouting and helping others.



Celebrating Memorial Day

I had the pleasure of meeting with local veterans and speaking at the Town of Colonie's Veterans Memorial Day Ceremony along with Jim Haas, chair of the Colonie Veterans Memorial Committee, Village of Colonie Mayor Thomas Tobin and Colonie Supervisor Peter Crummey. Let us remember all our heroes who have left us while fighting for our country.



Ronald H. Miller Memorial Bike Trail

This year, I also sponsored and passed a bill to designate a portion of the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail as the “Ronald H. Miller Memorial Bike Trail” after the honorable Ronald H. Miller, a former trustee on the Menands village board. Mr. Miller was deeply dedicated to the village of Menands and served as a trustee on the board for two terms from April 7, 2003, until April 4, 2011.

During his time on the village board, one of his priorities was developing a bikeway connector for the village to the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail. Although he sadly passed away on January 23, 2016, his commitment to the Village of Menands lives on in the bike trail connector that bears his name.

Kim Hill, NYS Chief Disability Officer Interview

I would like to welcome Kimberly T. Hill, a resident of Colonie, as the state's newly appointed Chief Disability Officer. I am pleased to have been able to speak with her on her new role, under which she hopes to make New York a model of inclusivity, integration and accessibility for individuals with disabilities. She and I previously worked together when she served as the Executive Director of the Assembly Task Force on People with Disabilities – I served as the Chair of the Assembly Task Force. Furthermore, she served as the Principal Analyst for the NYS Assembly Standing Committee on People with Disabilities.

A steadfast advocate for those with disabilities, Kim Hill worked collaboratively on establishing the Most Integrated Setting Coordinating Council (MISCC), the Nursing Facility Transition and Diversion Waiver and New York State's Medicaid Buy-In Program. She also helped codify Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) into law. Once again, I would like to congratulate Kim Hill on her appointment to the critical position of Chief Disability Officer.



[Click the image above to watch the full interview with Kim Hill, Chief Disability Officer of New York](#)