



JEFF GALLAHAN  
Assemblyman, 131<sup>st</sup> District

THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER  
Racing and Wagering  
Committee

COMMITTEES  
Aging  
Housing  
Local Governments  
Tourism, Parks, Arts and  
Sports Development

September 2023

Dear Neighbor,

As your Assemblyman, it's extremely important to me to have my finger on the pulse of our community so I can bring the facts about how you feel on state issues to Albany. **My mission as your Assemblyman is to serve you and make the best voting decisions I can based on what you want from our state government.**

**I also feel it's important you know what's going on in our State Legislature and you deserve to hear about it directly from your representative.** This is why I write to you today to give you an update on what happened during this year's legislative session.

Going into this year's session, I was concerned about local families and senior citizens trying to get by day-to-day while dealing with higher prices for just about everything. I feel our hardworking families need a break and the state government needs to rein in spending. We can't keep taxing our residents more and more to pay for Albany's massive and unsustainable budgets.

A budget shows what our state's priorities are, and I felt this year's \$229 billion budget didn't prioritize what we needed. **Instead of tax relief, combating rising crime, extending last year's partial gas tax suspension, and properly funding our most vital services, the budget gave \$1 billion to New York City for services for migrants, prohibited the installation of natural gas lines after 2028 in new homes and extended increased business taxes for three more years.** The outrageous cost-of-living increases have left New York families struggling to financially survive. **This is why I voted no on this year's state budget, the largest in our state's history.** (A.3000-D, A.3001-A, A.3002, A.3003-D, A.3004-D, A.3005-C, A.3006-C, A.3007-C, A.3008-C and A.3009-C)

Earlier this year, **the governor proposed a new housing plan that would drastically change our communities** by overruling local town boards and local laws, **forcing communities to build more housing, including apartment units, even in our most rural areas.** As a former town supervisor, I feel strongly that local governments should have control over what is allowed in their own backyards, and we should not be implementing a one-size-fits-all approach to housing, because the high rises in New York City just don't fit in Upstate New York.

I, along with many of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle, fought to stop this plan and keep our communities in charge of their own planning and zoning. **This bipartisan effort paid off as the governor's plan was rejected by the State Legislature and failed to pass.**

Out of the 150 Assembly Districts in New York, I am proud to represent such a large population of veterans here in the 131<sup>st</sup> District. **As the son of a World War II veteran, I am committed to honoring those who served our nation and finding ways to serve them.** Until recently, New York was one of a handful of states that did not have a state-owned and operated veterans cemetery. Thankfully, our state sought to change this and set out to select a site for New York's first veterans' cemetery. It was a long, competitive process, but finally, the Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Seneca County was selected.

I was proud our area was selected, and I was honored to attend the first Memorial Day Service at the first official New York State-owned veterans' cemetery, joined by many of my colleagues in government including the commissioner of the State Department of Veterans' Services and the governor. **Those who served our country deserve our utmost respect, and this cemetery is a fitting way to honor them and ensure they are taken care of in life and in death.**

**I'm a firm believer in the basics of government - roads, schools, and safety** - and unless our state government is doing the basics correctly, we shouldn't be expanding into other areas. Each year, New York gives funding to our local towns, cities, and villages for local road repairs and maintenance called CHIPS funding. And each year, it isn't enough to adequately maintain our roads and keep them in the great condition they deserve. Our roads and bridges are vital to our community, carrying everything from medicine to food to our children on a daily basis. **Unlike in many years past, this funding was increased by \$60 million statewide (A.3004-D), and while I don't feel it is enough, it is a step in the right direction and an acknowledgment of the importance of our roads.**

Our volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance workers are truly heroes, serving our community and often risking their lives for us all without pay. Their services are invaluable and save our taxpayers \$4.7 billion statewide on our property tax bills. But it is no secret that volunteer fire departments have struggled to recruit volunteers for quite some time. **I was proud to help support an effort to recruit more volunteers and give thanks to those who serve us by giving local governments the ability to implement a property tax exemption of up to 10% for volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers. (A.10155-A of 2022)**

In closing, I want you to know I hear you. **I hear your concerns and I share in your frustrations.** While this year's legislative session was not as fruitful as I feel they have been in years past, I am committed to working for you to make our state the best place I know it can be. This is our home. It has been my home my entire life and I'll never stop fighting for it. I'm honored to represent you in the State Assembly and I'm not giving up fighting for what we need here in Upstate New York.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffery L. Gallahan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeff Gallahan  
New York State Assembly  
131st Assembly District