

Focus on New York Families

News from State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.



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Dear Friend:

September, 2012

Families are the backbone of our communities, and they are always changing. More of today's families need to be two-income households to make ends meet. Some are headed by single parents struggling to care for their children and pay the bills. Others are continuing to provide homes for older children who have been unable to obtain jobs, and many other families find themselves caring for sick or elderly loved ones who cannot manage on their own.

But no matter what the individual make-up of our families, they all need and want many of the same things: good jobs, access to health care, educational opportunities, affordable housing, lower taxes and safety from harm. In this report, I have provided information on a range of issues of importance to women and families, as well as details of several upcoming community events that may be of interest to you.

As always, if you have any questions or if I can be of assistance to you in the community, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.
15th Senatorial District

SAVE THE DATE & FIND A JOB!

Friday, October 19th, 2012

To help bring together employers and potential employees, I am hosting a **free Job Fair on Friday, October 19th, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Resorts World, located at 110-00 Rockaway Boulevard in South Ozone Park.** If you're currently in the market for a job, or just want to obtain information about new career options, please join us and take advantage of the chance to meet with local companies and other employers and find out about current openings. At the Job Fair, you will be able to come into contact with over 100 different companies offering more than 1,000 job opportunities.

If you attend the Job Fair, don't forget to bring copies of your resume and dress professionally for any interviews you may be able to schedule. Over the years, I have organized many job fairs in my Senate district, and I am always pleased to help my constituents find employment, particularly at a time when jobs are sometimes difficult to come by.

If you have any questions about the upcoming Job Fair or any other community events I am sponsoring, please don't hesitate to call Peter DeLucia in my office at 1-718-738-1111.



Senator Addabbo greets job seekers at one of the many Job Fairs he has sponsored to help his constituents explore new employment opportunities.

HOME ECONOMICS: BALANCING THE FAMILY BUDGET

Virtually anyone who has recently gone to the grocery store, put gas in the car, paid their monthly rent or mortgage, or otherwise opened up their wallet to pay for basic living expenses knows that it's hard to make ends meet these days. While our economy is recovering, we still have a long way to go to help individuals and families afford the things they need and to ensure good, living wage jobs for everyone in need.

No one single government proposal or action is the silver bullet that will "fix" our economy. We all know it's much more complicated than that. But there are a number of legislative initiatives I've been pursuing that I think have great potential for addressing the economic woes of New York's working families. I would like to see our State:

Provide Family Care Insurance:

Families with newborn babies or sick family members shouldn't have to choose between leaving their jobs and caring for their loved ones. But this sometimes happens when companies don't provide paid family leave or sick leave when employees need to take time off from work to care for an infant or deal with the serious illness of a child,

spouse, parent or other family member. While federal law guarantees 12 weeks of unpaid leave for employees in these circumstances, many workers can't afford the loss of income, particularly if medical bills begin piling up. To address this issue, I am co-sponsoring legislation (S7547) that would establish family care insurance under our state's workers' compensation and insurance laws to enable New Yorkers to care for loved ones without wiping themselves out financially and emotionally.

Stop Outsourcing Jobs: I sponsor legislation (S1244) that would prevent businesses from reaping New York state tax breaks and other economic benefits when they outsource employment opportunities to other states and countries. Frankly, we are all cheated when we allow companies to reach into our pockets and spend our tax dollars on jobs that aren't available to workers here in New York State. While we can't always stop companies from sending jobs out of New York, we can make sure that we don't add insult to injury by letting them siphon off scarce state tax resources that could be used in better ways.

Raise the Minimum Wage: Several bills have been introduced in the Senate and Assembly to raise the minimum wage from its current paltry \$7.25 an hour and I believe this action needs to be taken sooner rather than later. Not only will a minimum wage hike help to lift some individuals and families, who are already working full-time, out of poverty, but it will give our local economies a boost as people are in a better position to purchase goods and services. Right now, a person working a full-time minimum wage job – 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year -- only earns \$15,180 a year before taxes.

Pass the Fair Pay Act: This legislation (S2200-A), which I co-sponsor, has one simple goal: ensuring that people who are performing equivalent jobs in the workplace are not discriminated against, in terms of their wages, based on their sex, race or national origin. Studies have demonstrated, for instance, that women performing the same jobs as men are very often paid significantly less. This is wrong, and the bill I am advocating attempts to establish pay equity guidelines in New York State and ensure that equal work – regardless of who performs it – is rewarded equally.

FIGHTING BACK AGAINST BREAST CANCER IN QUEENS & IN THE SENATE

No-Cost Mammography Events Scheduled for September 26th & December 1st

Although progress continues in the fight against breast cancer, this disease is still claiming far too many lives in New York State and across the nation. That's why – knowing that early screening and detection can literally be the difference between life and death in combating breast cancer – I have sponsored a number of events in my district throughout the years to enable women to obtain free mammograms and take proactive steps to safeguard their own health.

On September 26th and December 1st – I am again sponsoring events where women in my district will be able to receive mammograms at no cost. Here are the details:

Wednesday, September 26th:

Maspeth Federal Savings, 56-18 69th Street, Maspeth.
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Saturday, December 1st:

Woodhaven Richmond Hill Volunteer Ambulance Corps,
78-15 Jamaica Avenue, Woodhaven.
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Appointments are necessary, and can be made by calling 1-877-628-9090. Women who participate must be 40 and older, have a New York City mailing address, and not have had a mammogram in the past 12 months. If you, or someone you know, are in need of this screening but unable to afford it, please consider taking advantage of these potentially life-saving opportunities.

Apart from my continuing efforts to bring breast cancer screening and other health services directly to my constituents, I was pleased to vote this year in the Senate to pass two initiatives to help women both recover from this disease and better protect themselves from it.

One new law (Chapter 302) **requires that health insurance policies provide coverage for reconstructive surgery after partial mastectomies**, a benefit already available to women who have had

full mastectomies. The second new law (Chapter 265) **requires health care providers to give written notification to women who are found to have dense breast tissue**, which is not abnormal but can sometimes mask tumors during mammograms. Armed with this information, women can then discuss the potential need for additional screening with their physicians.



Local women in Senator Addabbo's district receive breast cancer screening services at a free mammography event he sponsored.

Questions About Breast Cancer? Need Support in Dealing with the Disease? Help, information and support are just a toll-free phone call or a mouse click away.

The Adelphi New York Statewide Breast Cancer Hotline and Support Program, created in 1980, is primarily staffed by volunteer breast cancer survivors – both women and men – who are available to answer questions about breast cancer, provide compassionate support for individuals and families struggling with the disease, and direct people in need to appropriate services. You can learn about free and low-cost screening programs, support groups, and much more. Just call **1-800-877-8077** or visit <http://www.adelphi.edu/nysbreastcancer/>

P.S. While breast cancer is about 100 times more common in women, men can get it, too. According to American Cancer Society estimates, almost 2,200 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed among men over the course of this year, and more than 400 men will die from the disease. The good news? Education and early screening are the best tools in the battle against breast cancer, regardless of gender!

LOWER HOUSING COSTS FOR CO-OP AND CONDO OWNERS IN SIGHT?

Whether we rent our homes or own them, there's no question that housing costs eat up a big portion of our household budgets every month. However, there may be some long overdue relief in sight for owners of condominiums and co-ops: the Legislature is expected to return to the State Capitol later this year to address, among other things, the inequities in New York City's property tax laws and provide fairer treatment for these property owners.

As the sponsor of legislation (S4283) that would permanently provide more equitable tax treatment for co-op and

condo owners, I was very disappointed when the State Legislature ended its regular session in June without taking up this issue. However, it seems that an agreement has been reached to both provide property tax relief for condo and co-op owners and extend the J-51 tax abatement program for the upgrading and renovation of multiple dwellings.

Under the terms of the reported agreement, tax abatement rates will be lowered for owners of co-ops and condominiums used as primary residences. While the existing tax abatement for co-ops and condos expired

on June 30th, the City will still send out the newest round of tax bills using that same rate. Once the new state legislation is approved, the lower rates are expected to be made retroactive to July 1st.

I look forward to reviewing this legislation and finding a solution to the unfair property tax burdens suffered by this group of property owners. This welcome reform will put more money in the pockets of middle-class homeowners in my Senate district and throughout the City, and make it a little easier for them to keep roofs over their heads.

PLANNING AHEAD FOR BETTER HEALTH CARE COVERAGE

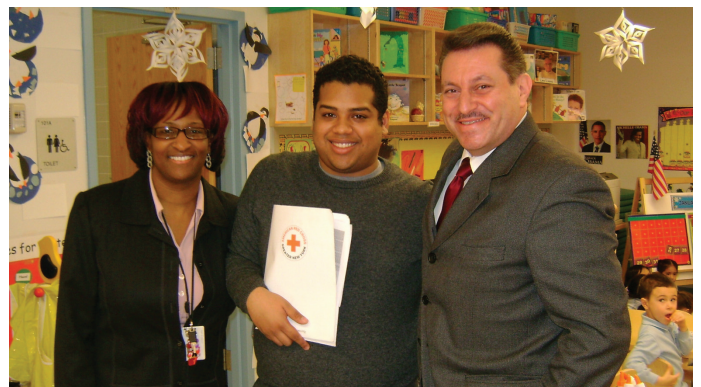
In New York State, almost 2.7 million of our residents under the age of 65 – or about 16 percent of our state's population – do not have health insurance coverage. In anticipation of the implementation of federal health care reform in New York, Governor Cuomo issued an Executive Order earlier this year to establish a New York State Health Benefit Exchange.

This Exchange, which is required under federal law and goes into effect in January, 2014, basically creates an organized marketplace where consumers and small businesses will be able to shop for coverage and easily compare different health plan options and receive certain tax credits.

When fully implemented, the Exchange and other aspects of health care reform are expected to help provide coverage for an additional one million New Yorkers, reduce private insurance coverage premiums by about 70 percent, and cut small business health insurance costs by about 21 percent.



A champion of increased support for tuition assistance and New York's higher education system, Senator Addabbo was pleased to greet students and faculty from St. John's University in Queens who visited the State Capitol earlier this year.



In cooperation with the American Red Cross, Senator Addabbo sponsored several "Scrubby Bear" programs to teach children how they can protect their own health through good hand washing and other personal hygiene techniques.

CHILD HEALTH PLUS: AFFORDABLE COVERAGE FOR YOUR KIDS

For many years now, New York State has offered Child Health Plus – a free or low-cost health insurance coverage program for children under age 19 whose family incomes are not low enough to qualify them for Medicaid but not high enough to enable them to afford private insurance plans.

Benefits provided under Child Health Plus include well-child visits, inpatient hospital care, physicals, dental and vision coverage, emergency room care, prescription drugs, speech and hearing tests and many other important health services.

Eligibility and premium costs for the program are tied to gross

family income and family size. For example, coverage is free for a family of four earning \$709 a month. Families with higher incomes pay monthly premiums per child of \$9, \$15, \$30, \$45 or \$60 a month depending on earnings and family size.

If you would like to learn more about this highly successful insurance coverage program for children in New York State, and to find out if your family might qualify, you can:

Call toll-free **1-800-698-4543** or visit the **Child Health Plus** website at:

http://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/child_health_plus/

LEGISLATIVE CORNER: HELPING WOMEN, CHILDREN & FAMILIES IN NEW YORK STATE

Over the course of the 2012 State legislative session, apart from increased funding for local schools, tuition assistance and higher education programs, a variety of measures were passed by the Senate and Assembly of importance to New York's women, children and families. Here's a sampling:

A new law will make it easier for local social service agencies to **care for and provide an array of services to destitute children** – including those who are orphaned, refugees or children whose only known parent or guardian is in a coma or suffering from dementia. Changes in the law will also help New York gain access to federal funds dedicated to the care of destitute children. (Signed into law, Chapter 3)

A bill approved by the Legislature requires general hospitals treating newborn babies to offer **parents and other caregivers the opportunity to receive the “whooping cough” vaccine** and protect their infants from exposure. (Signed into law, Chapter 215)

New legislation **prohibits bullying and cyberbullying in public schools**, and requires that anti-bullying policies – addressing in-person harassment as well as bullying through electronic means – be developed and enforced to protect children from this growing threat to their mental and physical health. (Signed into law, Chapter 102)

A new law will **provide vital care for victims of sexual assault who are thought to be at risk of infection with HIV/AIDS**. Survivors will be provided with appropriate medication to decrease the chances of infection, as well as the opportunity to seek follow-up treatment. (Signed into law, Chapter 39)

To address a recent decision by the New York State Court of Appeals, legislation was approved to reaffirm that knowingly **viewing or accessing child pornography on the Internet** is a crime, and specifically a Class E felony offense. (S7742/A10713, to be sent to Governor for review)

Strong new legislation was passed to **strengthen the state's response to domestic violence by developing new protections for victims and cracking down on repeat offenders**. Penalties are increased for repeat offenses; firearms possession and violations of restraining orders will be considered in determining bail for offenders; abusers will be prevented from claiming the remains of the person they have hurt or killed, and a new statewide Fatality Review Team will be created to find ways to better address family violence. (S7638/A10624, to be sent to Governor for review)

Victims of domestic violence will be able to stay a maximum of 180 days in residential programs, rather than 135 days, to give them **more time to secure safe, permanent housing**. (A2651/S6308, to be sent to Governor for review)

A new bill requires that **up-to-date photographs of level 3 sex offenders**, the most dangerous, continue to be made available after their release from prison if their appearance has changed. (Signed into law, Chapter 364)

A new **Protection of People with Special Needs Act** is designed to overhaul and improve the state's system of providing care for people with special needs and disabilities. The measure seeks to better protect and serve more than one million vulnerable children and adults in state operated, certified or licensed facilities and programs. (S7749/A10721, will be sent to Governor for review)

In order to address rampant prescription drug abuse in New York State, which is becoming a serious problem among our young people, the **Internet System for Tracking Over-Prescribing (I-STOP) Act** was approved. The bill establishes an electronic registry, the first of its kind in the nation, to enable doctors, pharmacists and law enforcement to track prescriptions for controlled substances in real time and prevent excessive prescription and refill requests. A disposal program for unused prescription drugs is also created. (Signed into law, Chapter 447)

To help curb instances of skin cancer and other negative effects of exposure to excessive ultraviolet radiation, **children under 16 will no longer be able to use tanning beds**, with or without parental consent. (Signed into law, Chapter 105)

A new bill will allow people whose health insurance policies allow for annual physicals or well care visits to **receive these services once every calendar year**, regardless of whether 365 days have passed between these exams. (Signed into law, Chapter 273)

Legislation **prohibits the sale of electronic cigarettes**, which are unregulated and whose health risks have not yet been fully determined, **to those under 18**. (A9044/S2926, to be sent to the Governor).

