

WELCOME TO THE

# STATE LEGISLATURE



Courtesy of



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

**HUGH T. FARLEY**

44TH SENATE DISTRICT

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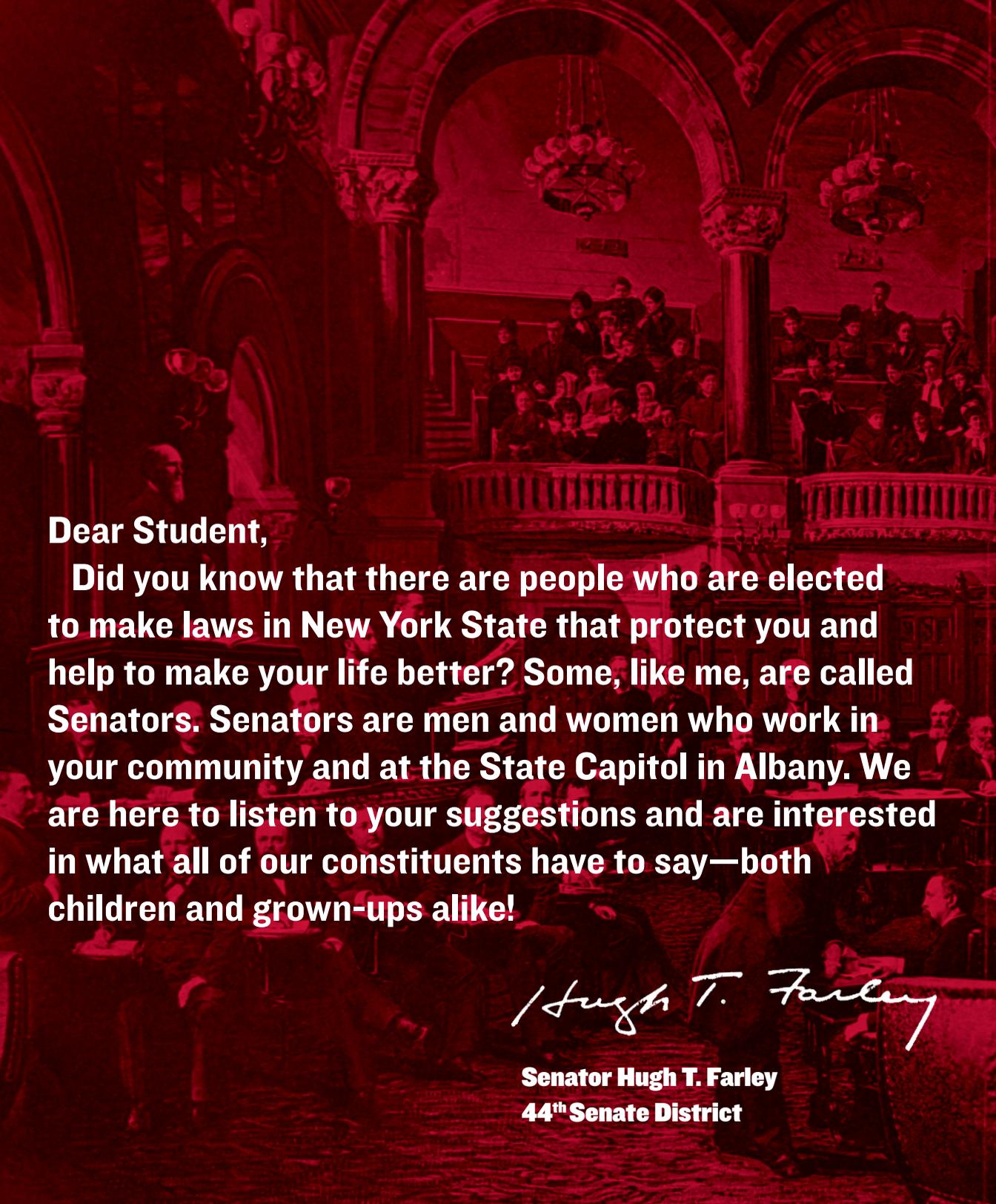
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**Dear Student,**

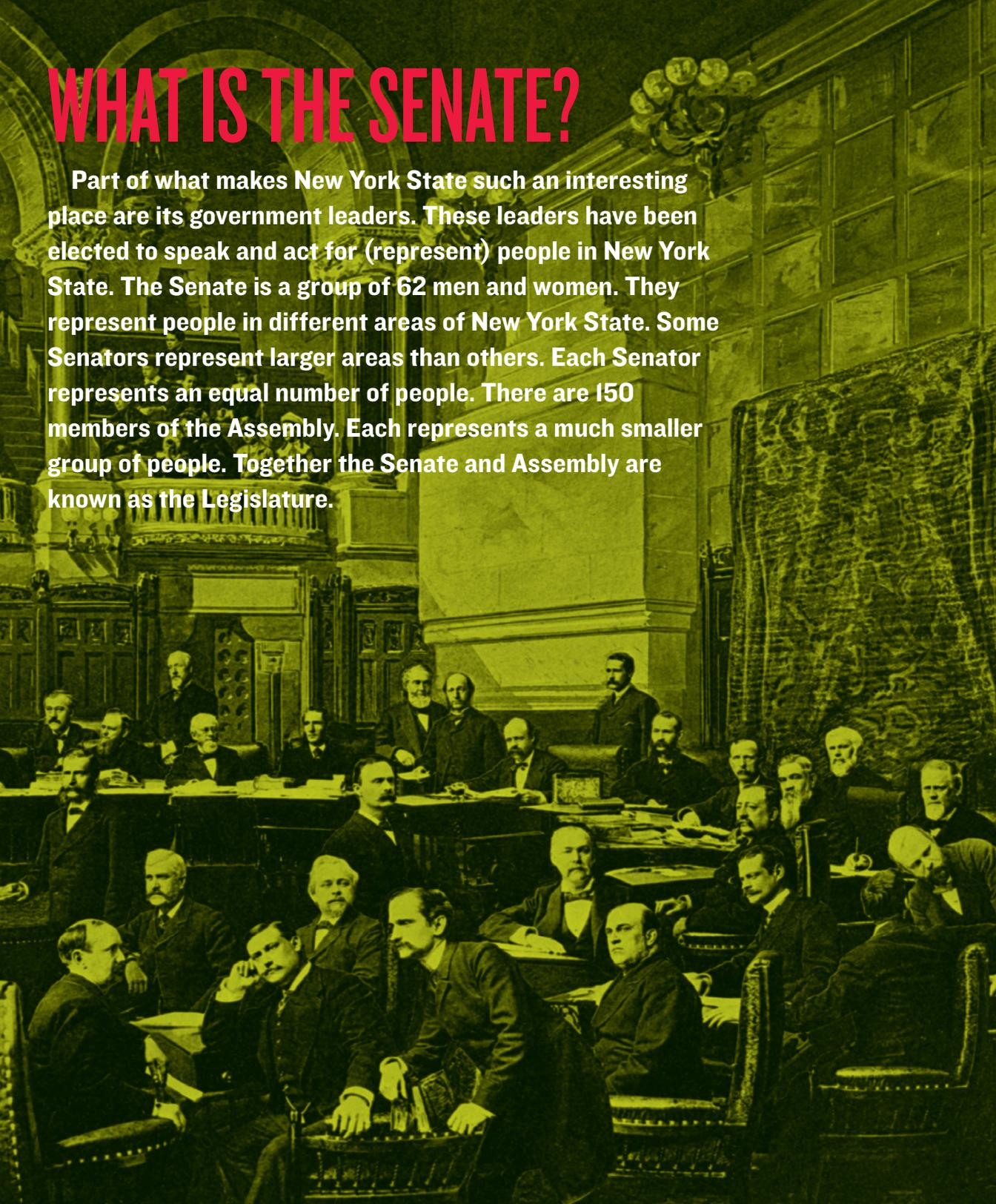
**Did you know that there are people who are elected to make laws in New York State that protect you and help to make your life better? Some, like me, are called Senators. Senators are men and women who work in your community and at the State Capitol in Albany. We are here to listen to your suggestions and are interested in what all of our constituents have to say—both children and grown-ups alike!**

*Hugh T. Farley*

**Senator Hugh T. Farley  
44<sup>th</sup> Senate District**

# WHAT IS THE SENATE?

Part of what makes New York State such an interesting place are its government leaders. These leaders have been elected to speak and act for (represent) people in New York State. The Senate is a group of 62 men and women. They represent people in different areas of New York State. Some Senators represent larger areas than others. Each Senator represents an equal number of people. There are 150 members of the Assembly. Each represents a much smaller group of people. Together the Senate and Assembly are known as the Legislature.



# WHAT DOES A SENATOR DO?



Senators write their ideas down in an official form called a bill. But writing the bill is only the start of the job. Each Senator's bill must go through a few steps before it can become a law. A law is a rule everyone in our State has to obey. Sometimes there are questions about a Senator's bill. The Senator will give reasons why the bill was written. He or she will tell who will be helped by the bill. More than half of all Senators have to vote "yes" on a bill for it to pass.

If there are fewer than 32 "yes" votes in the Senate, a bill cannot be passed. The Assembly also votes on bills. The Senate and the Assembly can each give enough "yes" votes to the same bill. If they do, the bill is sent to the Governor. The Governor is elected by all the people in our State. He or she heads another part of our government

called the Executive Branch. Most of the time, he or she has the final decision on a bill.

The Governor can agree with the Legislature that a bill is good. Then he or she signs it and it becomes law. The Governor sometimes does not agree with a bill. He or she then can veto it so it cannot become a law.

Although writing bills is a large part of the job, your Senator does more than write and vote on bills. Your Senator is here to help you and your parents with any problems you may have with the government. Your Senator wants to hear your ideas. If they would be good for New York State, they could be made into a bill. You or your parents don't have to come to Albany to tell your Senator your ideas or problems. You can just write, call or e-mail him or her. We all have to work together to make our government work.



# THE STATE CAPITOL BUILDING

New York State's Capitol building is a very important place. It is where New York State's leaders meet and do most of their work. The Capitol building took over 30 years to build. Many different people helped to build the Capitol and it was finished in the year 1899. The Senate Chamber is on the third floor of the Capitol. The Assembly Chamber and the Governor's Chamber are also in the Capitol.

# VISITING THE SENATE CHAMBER AND GALLERY

You may stop in the Senate Gallery (upstairs) or Senate Chamber (downstairs) to see where Senators talk about and vote on bills. Each Senator has his or her own desk and chair in the Chamber. The Chamber now looks the way it did when it was first built, over 100 years ago. Changes had been made over the years. This took away from the original beauty of the Chamber.

When it came time to clean and repair the Chamber, the Senators decided to return it to the way it looked before.

If you would like to visit me in Albany and go on a tour of the Capitol Building, please contact my office and we can make an appointment.



# FAST FACTS

There are

**62**

Senators in  
New York State.

There are

**150**

Assembly members  
in New York State.

Senators and  
Assembly members  
are elected for

**2-YEAR**

terms.

A Senator typically  
represents about

**300  
000**

people in a community.

Over a two-year  
session, approximately

**9,000**

bills are introduced  
in the Senate.

The Governor is  
elected to a

**4-YEAR**

term.

Each year, the Senate  
passes about

**1,400 BILLS**

and  
around

**800**

of these bills  
become law.

# KEY WORDS YOU SHOULD KNOW

**Albany** The state's Capital and where the Legislature and Governor work to pass laws.

**Legislature** The law-making branch of state government.

**Senate** The legislative body that includes all the Senators.

**Senator** A state representative who is a member of the Senate.

**Assembly** The legislative body that includes all Assembly members.

**Assembly member** A state representative who is a member of the Assembly.

**Constituents** The people in your community who are represented by a Senator (YOU are a constituent).

**Bill** A proposal that is drafted and waiting to be approved.

**Committee** A group of Senators who look a bill over before it goes to the entire Senate for approval.

**Law** A bill that has been approved by the Senate, the Assembly, and the Governor.

**Chapter Number** The number given to the bill once it becomes law.

**Veto** The action the Governor takes if he or she doesn't like a bill and does not want to sign it into law.

