



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

Grow: Pride of NY, Fishing Licenses from Home, Calculate College Costs

DAVID J. VALESKY April 11, 2014

Although much of the focus in Albany this week is on the state budget, legislation is also being considered and brought to the Senate floor. Today the Senate unanimously passed legislation I sponsored ([S.5064](#)) that will help consumers find garden centers, nurseries, Christmas tree farms and other horticulture dealers that sell New York state products. The Grow: Pride of New York program creates a designation for such businesses and allows them to use marketing materials that promote their locally sourced products.

In addition, I supported several bills that passed the Senate this week:

- [S.6865](#) establishes a program to increase participation of Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprises in State contracting as a significant step in expanding economic opportunity for veterans.
- [S.3149](#) amends the election law to add New York to the agreement among the states to elect the president by national popular vote.
- [S.947](#) allows industrial development agencies to help agricultural producers promote job and economic growth.
- [S.4751](#) expands the persons required to report cases of suspected child abuse to include school athletic directors and school personnel or other persons required to hold a

temporary coaching license or professional coaching certificate.

Budget negotiations are continuing. Thank you to those of you who responded to my recent survey; your feedback is proving to be valuable guidance during discussions.

Purchase and Print Your Fishing License at Home

Trout and salmon fishing season starts April 1, and for the first time a fishing license can be purchased and printed from home by visiting licensecenter.ny.gov. Fishing license fees have been reduced, there is improved access for fishing at various sites across the state, and expanded fishing clinics are part of the state's NY Open for Fishing and Hunting initiative. Anglers can also consider buying a lifetime fishing license that can be converted to an Adventure License and be eligible to receive a free adventure vehicle license plate in one of nine designs.

Spring Cleaning for the Earth

Registration is going on now for one of the largest litter cleanups in the country: OCRRA's 2014 Earth Day Litter Cleanup on Friday, April 11 and Saturday, April 12. Form a group, pick a spot that needs some cleaning, and register [online](http://ocrra.org) by April 4. Interested in cleaning up an area of Syracuse? Check out one of the ten "Clean Up 'Cuse" projects sponsored by the [Mayor's office](http://ocrra.org) Questions? Email earthday@ocrra.org or call (315) 453-2866, ext. 202.

New Tool Helps Students Calculate Bottom Line College Costs

The Financial Aid Award Letter Comparison Tool can help students and families interpret financial aid award letters from colleges and get bottom line costs before making a final decision on a school. The site, HESC.ny.gov, is free and safe to use, with no personal data collected or saved.

For many families it can be difficult to choose the best college at an affordable price, especially without a full understanding of the total costs, including which types of aid must be paid back. The tool generates side-by-side comparisons, highlights net costs, and estimates the full two- or four-year cost of each college. Users can also get a recommendation on the potential income needed after graduation to pay back student loans.

Free Help for Filing Tax Returns

The IRS offers free tax preparation services available through the Free File program. Every taxpayer with a 2013 Adjusted Gross Income of \$58,000 or less may visit [Free File](#) to prepare, complete, and e-file their federal tax returns, or submit an extension, at no cost. The service is also available in Spanish.

Free File also offers basic federal e-filing services with no income limitations. This basic e-filing service, called Free File Fillable Forms, allows taxpayers who are familiar with tax law and need no help to complete and file their federal income tax electronically. It is also available at the [Free File site](#).

Cellist Elinor Frey to Perform

The Cathedral Academy of Pompei (CAP) is holding a benefit concert featuring cellist Elinor Frey on Friday, March 28, at 7:00 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, 310 Montgomery St., Syracuse. The concert supports the Symphonic Music Program at CAP, and tickets are available through the Symphoria Box Office at 315-299-5598 by boxoffice@experiencesymphoria.org.