



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

## End of 2014 Legislative Session Update

DAVID J. VALESKY August 13, 2014

The 2014 Legislative Session has ended and much was accomplished, including [an agreement to legalize medical marijuana](#) in New York State. I supported this legislation because I believe it is about compassionate care and will provide comfort and relief to people with serious medical conditions. I am satisfied that the program will be highly regulated to ensure the drug goes only to those who need it. The legislation includes provisions to ensure medical marijuana is reserved only for patients with serious conditions and is dispensed and administered in a manner that protects public health and safety.

An agreement was also reached on a series of bills to help address the [growing heroin and opioid epidemic](#), as well as prescription drug abuse, in New York State. The legislation includes new programs and insurance reforms to improve treatment options for individuals suffering from heroin and opioid addiction, measures to strengthen penalties and put in place additional tools for law enforcement to crack down on the distribution of illegal drugs, provisions to ensure the proper and safe use of naloxone, and support for enhanced public awareness campaigns to prevent drug abuse.

I supported Governor Cuomo's [Program Bill #56](#), which will delay full implementation of teacher evaluations that use the Common Core teaching standards and student test scores as measurements.

Other legislation I sponsored that affects Central New York and passed the Senate include:

- The Onondaga Lake Amphitheater Infrastructure and Revitalization Project Act ([S.7745](#)) allows Onondaga County to award one bidder the work to design and construct the amphitheater.
- A new, specialized educational path to train students to fill the growing number of jobs in New York in manufacturing and high tech fields. The bill ([S.5966](#)) creates a Career and Technical Education (CTE) diploma to provide an alternative pathway to a high school graduation that incorporates career-focused education classes and curriculum into school programs.
- Protection for senior citizens from deception by professionals who use senior-specific designations. The bill ([S.7254](#)) requires anyone using such a designation to disclose its source in advertisements and to prospective clients.
- Bill [S.5873](#) strengthens laws against sexual harassment by ensuring that all employees are protected from sexual harassment by applying existing protections to businesses of all sizes.

The Senate passed several other bills relating to the Women's Equality Agenda:

- [S5872](#): ensuring that women receive equal pay for equal work by prohibiting employers from paying employees disparate amounts due to gender
- [S5874](#): removing barriers to remedying discrimination by allowing successful parties in employment or credit discrimination cases based on sex to recover attorney's fees
- [S5875](#): preventing employment discrimination based on family status
- [S5876](#): preventing housing discrimination against domestic violence victims

- **S5878**: creating a pilot program to allow domestic violence victims to electronically file for orders of protection
- **S5879B**: preventing the exploitation of children and adults who are victims of human trafficking
- **S5880**: requiring employers to provide reasonable accommodations to employees with pregnancy-related medical conditions

In addition, I supported Governor Cuomo's **Program Bill #38R**, which provides New York craft beverage manufacturers with greater opportunities to market their products, including allowing producers to serve "by the bottle" and "by the glass" as well as permitting farm distilleries to increase the retail outlets where they can sell and offer samples of their products. In addition, this bill would reduce costs for small manufacturers by permitting them to produce more of their product at lower fees.

### **Oneida Blood Drive**

Join me for a special "Communities That Care" blood drive on Friday, June 27, from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Oneida YMCA, 701 Seneca St., Oneida. The need for blood is constant and is an essential component for patient care in area hospitals. Each day, the Red Cross New York-Penn Region needs to collect about 1,200 units of blood to maintain a sufficient supply.

Donors at this event will receive a special t-shirt and have the opportunity to enter a raffle for a \$200 Visa gift card courtesy of Suburban Propane. Walk-ins are welcome, but donors are encouraged to schedule an appointment in advance by calling 1-800-RED CROSS or by visiting [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org).

### **Libraries Receive Construction Grant Funds**

Seven libraries in Madison and Onondaga counties have been awarded public library construction grant funds. The capital funds, provided for in the 2013 State Budget, will enable the libraries to start or complete various projects that will improve operations, safety, and energy efficiency. Libraries receiving grants in Madison County are:

- Hamilton Public Library--\$28,201--The project addresses safety, historic preservation, safeguarding structural integrity, and provision for equitable access.
- New Woodstock Free Library--\$5,852--The project will replace the floor to improve safety and reduce trip hazards and risk of infection from mold, fleas and germs.
- Oneida Library--\$63,421--Phase two site work project which is the second step in the construction of a new library building.
- Sullivan Free Library--\$4,400--Restoration of original columns and woodwork on library building.

In Onondaga County:

- Liverpool Public Library--\$7,368--This project adds four cameras in three different positions to an existing surveillance system to provide additional coverage.
- Northern Onondaga Public Library, Cicero--\$114,525--Replacement of HVAC equipment at the main branch in Cicero.
- Onondaga County Public Library, Salina St.--\$315,266--Construct new three-stop elevator in the Central Library as part of an overall project to redesign and reconfigure the library.