



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Addabbo: New 2019 laws to increase minimum wage, expand paid family leave, and help with safe disposal of expired and unwanted medications

SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR. January 9, 2019

| ISSUE: **MEDICATION TAKE BACK, PAID FAMILY LEAVE, MINIMUM WAGE, NEW LAWS, ADDABBO**

NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. is informing his constituents of a number of new 2019 laws that will offer a boost in wages for lower-income workers, provide more aid to families who need time off from work to care for new babies or sick relatives, and help to protect the environment from drug contamination.

“The New Year is looking brighter for our environment and workers, those who need to deal with family issues without bankrupting themselves and improved wages,” said Addabbo. “As a strong supporter of these initiatives, I am delighted they are now in effect.”

First off, he noted, the minimum wage for employees at New York City companies with more than 10 workers has now risen by \$2 to \$15 per hour. Employees at smaller businesses have received an hourly wage hike to \$13.50. “With the cost of living constantly rising, this initiative will enable more people to balance their family budgets,” said Addabbo.

The State’s paid family leave program, which Addabbo championed for years prior to its enactment, expands to provide workers with 10 weeks of paid time off – instead of eight – to bond with a new child or care for seriously ill family members. Employees participating in

the program will now receive 55 percent of their wages while on leave, instead of the 50 percent offered in 2018. “By 2021, paid family leave participants will be able to take a full 12 weeks of paid leave, and receive 65 percent of their wages,” he said. According to the Senator, these changes will help businesses with increased productivity from their employees, with no negative fiscal impact.

The New York State Drug Take Back Act, which Addabbo co-sponsored, will enable consumers to more safely and conveniently dispose of expired, unused, or unwanted medications through on-site pharmacy collections, pre-paid mail-back envelopes, and other means – all paid for by drug manufacturers. “I often hear from constituents who don’t want to flush drugs down the drain, but don’t know how to dispose of them safely,” said Addabbo. “This new law will aid consumers, help reduce access to dangerous opioids left sitting in family medicine cabinets, and protect our environment from contamination with pharmaceuticals.”

Other new 2019 laws now in effect include initiatives to:

- Require that all new and renovated buildings with public bathrooms be equipped with diaper changing tables in both women’s and men’s restrooms.
- Provide new health care and death benefits to volunteer firefighters diagnosed with a variety of cancers, a law initially enacted in 2017 and co-sponsored by Addabbo.

“As we begin the 2019 New York State Legislative session on January 9, I look forward to building on these accomplishments and addressing many other important issues affecting my constituents and New Yorkers statewide,” said Addabbo.