



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

## End of Session Update

JOSE M. SERRANO June 21, 2019

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving as your representative in the New York State Senate. The 2019 Legislative Session has come to a close, and I'm so proud of all that we accomplished this year as a Democratic Majority alongside our Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins. Together, we made history in Albany and our achievements will make a positive difference in the lives of countless New Yorkers. My colleagues and I passed groundbreaking legislation to combat climate change, preserve affordable housing, stand up for human rights, and protect our most vulnerable residents.

There is nothing more important than preserving our environment for future generations. For this reason, we have taken action and passed the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act - the most expansive climate change legislation in the nation. I'm also proud that we addressed the affordable housing crisis affecting low and middle income families in New York City by passing the strongest tenant protections in the history of our state. This legislation included provisions from my bill to eliminate the vacancy bonus, which will protect affordability by preventing landlords from raising rents by up to 20 percent after a vacancy.

In addition, we had some monumental victories in the State budget. As a longtime advocate for the right of every child to receive a quality education, I am heartened that the budget provided the largest amount of school aid in the history of our state at \$27.9 billion - a \$1

billion increase. As Chair of the Senate Committee on Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation, I was pleased with the major victories in the budget for State Parks, libraries, and cultural organizations.

None of this would have been possible without residents of the 29th Senate District who, for years, have been advocating for these important issues.

There is still much more work to do, and we will enter the next legislative session with renewed purpose to continue the fight for common sense, progressive legislation that will improve quality of life for all New Yorkers. Read below for highlights from the 2019 Legislative Session.

### **Affordable Housing**

My colleagues and I passed the strongest tenant protection and affordable housing laws in the history of our state. These included provisions from my bill to remove the vacancy bonus. The legislation also ends vacancy decontrol and protects tenants of rent-controlled and rent-stabilized apartments from large rent increases

### **Climate/Environment**

Passed the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CCPA)- the most expansive and aggressive climate change legislation in the nation. It addresses the severe effects of climate change and generates solutions by cutting greenhouse gases, diverting the state's energy reliance to renewable sources, and creating green jobs to promote environmental justice in New York State

Passed my bill to identify high environmental impact zones in order to recognize communities overburdened with environmental hazards and consider the potential negative consequences of any future State projects in those areas

Banned single-use plastic bags in the state of New York

## **LGBTQ Rights**

Passed a bill to protect transgender New Yorkers under the state's Hate Crimes Law

Banned so-called "conversion therapy" or sexual orientation change efforts with minors

Passed legislation to limit the "gay panic" or "trans panic" defense in charges of murder in the second degree

Restored benefits for LGBTQ veterans who were less than honorably discharged due to their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression

## **Roosevelt Island Governance**

The State Senate passed my bill which relates to the management of the Roosevelt Island operating corporation and adds workplace discrimination protections

## **Women's Rights/Health**

Codified the protections of Roe v. Wade into New York law through the Reproductive Health Act

Passed the Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act, ensuring that individuals have timely access to contraception and the information they need in order to plan their families and their future

Expanded protections from wage discrimination for public employees, ensured equal pay for equal work for public employees with protected class status, and prohibited salary history inquiries to prevent the cycle of wage discrimination

## **Protecting Children**

Passed my bill to protect children from falling furniture and electronics in child day care centers

Passed a bill to protect children from toxic toys by establishing strict regulations on toxic chemicals in children's products

## **Survivor Protections**

Passed the Child Victims Act to extend New York's outdated statute of limitations for child sexual abuse

Closed loopholes in sexual harassment laws and extended the statute of limitations for sexual harassment in the workplace

## **Voting Reform**

We passed bills to enable early voting and no-excuse absentee voting, and extend Primary Election voting hours

## **Immigrant Rights**

We finally passed the Jose Peralta New York State DREAM Act, which provides educational opportunities for children of immigrant New Yorkers

Restored drivers licenses for all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status

## **Transportation**

As part of the budget, we created a significant new revenue stream for the New York City Subway, LIRR, and Metro-North, and reduced traffic and emissions by establishing

congestion pricing

### **Criminal Justice Reform**

The New York State Budget included criminal justice reforms that will eliminate cash bail for misdemeanors and nonviolent felonies, ensuring that no New Yorker is incarcerated due to their financial circumstances

Included measures to ensure the right to a speedy trial and transform the discovery process

Included provisions from my bill to close loopholes exploited by employers to discriminate against New Yorkers after their criminal charges are scheduled for dismissal

Decriminalized possession of small amounts of marijuana and ensured that past convictions will be expunged

### **Cultural Affairs, Tourism, and Parks**

Established an arts fund to receive contributions for the support of the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA)

Our State budget allocated \$110 million for State Parks and \$16 million zoos, botanical gardens and aquaria

Dedicated \$96 million to our public libraries and \$43 million to support local arts, museums and other cultural organizations

Passed my bill to require public input prior to the permanent closure of a park or historic site owned, held or administered by the office of parks, recreation and historic preservation

**I am also the proud sponsor of the following bills, which successfully passed the New York State Senate:**

Bill S181 - Identifies the criteria the commissioner of environmental conservation should consider in publishing a list of high local environmental impact zones

Bill S3563A- Requires the anchoring of furniture and electronics in child day care centers and certain other facilities

Bill S3570 - Establishes an arts fund to receive contributions for the support of the New York state council on the arts via a check-off on state income tax forms

Bill S183B - Requires the conducting of public hearings and reports thereon prior to the permanent closure of a park or historic site owned, held or administered by the office of parks, recreation and historic preservation

Bill S1557 - Creates a temporary state commission concerning the incidence of asthma in the Bronx

Bill S2493 - Provides senior citizens shall be entitled to use any park, recreational facility or historic site without the imposition of any fee or other charge

Bill S2494 - Prohibits littering on state park lands

Bill S179 - Directs the commissioner of education to require public schools to report on compliance with art education instruction requirements

Bill S2406 - Requires cultural awareness and competence training for medical professionals

Bill S2062 - Establishes the commission on New York state history and provides for its powers and duties

Bill S1555 - Requires the informed consent of the owner of a companion animal prior to euthanizing such animal

Bill S6023 - Relates to the provision of criminal history background checks free of charge to mentoring programs operated by not-for-profit corporations

Bill S3571 - Relates to the cleaning of playground equipment after pesticide exposure