



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

Happy New Year: 2021 Recap

SHELLEY B. MAYER January 7, 2022

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! I extend my deepest wishes for health and happiness to you and your loved ones. This week, in her State of the State, we heard Governor Kathy Hochul reiterate her commitment to building and expanding on New York's historic legacy of innovation, social justice and economic opportunity. I look forward to examining the details of each of the proposals as well as their budget implications. However, before we dig into the 2022 legislative session, I would like to take a moment to reflect on what we accomplished in 2021.

As chair of the Education Committee, I was extremely pleased to deliver a \$1.4 billion increase to Foundation Aid which funds our public schools, and to secure a commitment to fully fund the balance of Foundation Aid owed to schools over the next two years. During an extremely difficult time for our students, teachers, and school communities, we also worked with our federal partners, particularly Senator Chuck Schumer, to ensure that \$12 billion in federal COVID-related funding went directly to school districts to address their individual needs.

Legislative Successes

We had legislative victories as well, including [S.5576C](#), which recognizes teacher performance cannot be tied to student assessment as we continue to battle the severe impacts of the

COVID-19 pandemic, and [S.1239](#), which will increase children with diabetes' access to recently authorized nasal spray glucagon in the school setting.

In total, I sponsored 100 bills and co-sponsored 174 bills in 2021. Of the bills I sponsored, I am pleased to report that 19 were signed into law by the Governor, which include important protections for consumers and workers. An additional 22 of my bills were passed by the Senate but not by the Assembly. I will work again to pass them this year.

Just before the holidays, two of my bills to reduce unfair practices of credit card companies and gift card issuers were signed into law. The first, [S.133B](#), will require credit card companies to inform credit card holders within 45 days if their account or rewards program is modified, canceled, closed or terminated. Holders will then have 90 days to redeem or exchange their rewards points. The second, [S.3467B](#), will lengthen gift card minimum expiration dates to 9 years and allow consumers to exchange store-specific gift cards with remaining balances of less than \$5 for cash.

Two of my bills enacted into law will increase awareness of the New York State Department of Labor's Shared Work program which prevents layoffs, reduces the cost of training new employees, and allows employees to receive partial unemployment benefits while working on a part-time basis. [S.18A](#) makes it a requirement for the Department of Labor to share information about their programs with businesses on a yearly basis. [S.17A](#) authorizes employees to petition an employer to apply to participate in a shared work program in order to avoid a workforce reduction without fear of retaliation.

Other bills that I sponsored which were signed into law include:

- [S.4410C](#), which creates the New York State 250th Commemoration Commission and establishes a fund to plan the semiquincentennial commemoration of the American

Revolution in 2026.

- [S.7125](#), which will assist veterans' organizations in making much needed improvements to their facilities by allowing Westchester County to waive fees associated with capital improvements.
- [S.255B](#), which requires prevailing wage be paid on public works projects for work involving hauling and delivery of aggregate supply construction materials.

I thank my Senate and Assembly colleagues for their support, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for her leadership, and the Governor for recognizing the importance of these bills for New Yorkers. I also thank my very talented legislative staff for their hard work on these and other bills.

Direct Assistance to Constituents

I would also like to thank my dedicated constituent services staff who worked on over 900 constituent cases in 2021, covering a wide range of issues including COVID-19, Hurricane Ida recovery, problems with reaching the Department of Labor and resolving unemployment claims, healthcare, health insurance, and housing issues. I am especially proud of our work with Attorney General Letitia James, the Department of Labor, and Jane Lauer Barker Esq. to deliver \$2.7 million to the Doral Arrowwood workers, most of whom lived in my district, whose termination on Christmas Eve two years ago was in violation of the WARN Act and who were entitled to financial relief under the Act.

As I work on my legislative priorities for the coming session, I will keep you posted on the bills that I introduce, and of course look forward to responding to your opinions on the many proposals made by my colleagues.

I look forward to continuing to fight for you in the New York State Senate in 2022. As always, if there is anything my office can do to assist you, please don't hesitate to email me at smayer@nysenate.gov or call (914) 934-5250.

Warm regards,

Shelley Mayer

State Senator, 37th District