



New York State Senator
DAPHNE JORDAN
(R, C, IP, REF) 43RD SENATE DISTRICT



Dear Friend:

Happy Friday and welcome to the March 19 edition of my Weekly Wrap!

The end of the month is quickly approaching, and with that comes the State Budget deadline (April 1). I am continuing to push for Saratoga County and Saratoga Springs getting their fair share of VLT host aid, which is VITAL for our local economy and local communities. I'm also seeking bipartisan economic and government reform with Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara through our newly launched "Upstate Jobs Caucus" which I am proudly co-chairing. You can read more about these two important issues in my Weekly Wrap!

Also featured in this week's Wrap is my calling out the Cuomo Administration for its unethical behavior towards New York's group homes and residents. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many of these homes were overlooked and, as a result, there were thousands of avoidable COVID-19 cases. The lack of effort put forth by the Governor and his administration to protect group homes must be examined and corrected.

You'll find much more in this week's Wrap, including my support for Operation Adopt a Soldier, my FOX News interview, a COVID-19 vaccine update, the City of Hudson's State of the Community event, and more!

As always, I want to hear from YOU. If you have a comment, question, or concern, please email me at jordan@nysenate.gov or call my office at (518) 371-2751. Thank you for reading and subscribing to my Weekly Wrap. It's an honor and a privilege serving you!

– Senator Daphne Jordan, 43rd Senate District

Group homes overlooked by the Cuomo Administration



While much of our lives and economy have been micromanaged by the Cuomo Administration and his State Health Department throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, group homes for the disabled were overlooked, resulting in 6,000+ infected residents and staff members. Like the Governor's dangerous nursing home mandates that resulted in 15,000 deaths, this issue could have been avoided.

In a [Washington Examiner article](#) released late last week, one group home worker was reported saying that “[i]n one case, an individual shared a room in a medically frail facility with another individual — one had COVID, and the other did not. The only thing separating them was a cloth privacy screen... I believe the dysfunction goes all the way to the top, to Cuomo.”

Advocating for Video Lottery Terminal Host Aid for Saratoga



I voted NO on the one-house budget proposal put forward by the Senate Majority on Monday. One major reason I voted in opposition was the Majority's failure to restore \$3.1 million Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) Host Aid for the City of Saratoga Springs and Saratoga County.

This VLT funding is extremely important for Saratoga's economy, especially with last season's horse racing fans being forbidden to attend. This has caused a serious domino effect on the City's economy. Many of the small businesses, restaurants, and hotels depend on a strong racing season and tourism. If you don't believe me, go downtown, and see the effects for yourself.

Meanwhile, cities with Democratic Senators ARE receiving VLT host aid. This issue is too important to fall prey to petty partisan politics, and I will continue advocating for Saratoga's fair share of VLT host aid, along with my colleagues Senator Jim Tedisco, Assemblywoman Mary Beth Walsh, and Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner.

[Click here](#) to view our letter written to Governor Cuomo on January 25. To watch my floor remarks earlier this week, [click here](#).

Operation Adopt a Soldier



Many boxes were packed on Saturday for our troops by a terrific showing of volunteers at Operation Adopt a Soldier! We thank our military members for their service, let them know they are in our thoughts, and send them goodies from home. I was proud to be part of this special effort!

Adopt a Soldier is a fantastic non-profit organization that supports service members during deployment and when they return. Volunteer at 891 Saratoga Rd, Gansevoort, NY. 518-260-9922, or visit their [website here](#).

My interview on FOX News



It was great being on FOX News' America Reports program with Sandra Smith. I weighed in on the growing calls for Governor Cuomo's resignation. Watch the [video here](#).

Advocating for Upstate, Co-Chairing the Upstate Jobs Caucus



**SENATOR
DAPHNE JORDAN, CO-CHAIR
ASSEMBLYMAN
ANGELO SANTABARBARA, CO-CHAIR**

I'm excited to Co-Chair the new, bipartisan Upstate Jobs Caucus (UJC) with Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara. Our UJC will seek holistic reform on critical issues such as the economy, jobs, fixing state government, and achieving real solutions that will help Upstate's taxpayers, small businesses, and local communities. This opportunity presents the first time that Upstate leaders from BOTH parties have united to seek the reforms that our state – especially Upstate – desperately needs. [View the Spectrum News article here](#). Our press release announcing the UJC is shared below.

For Immediate Release: Wednesday, March 17, 2021

New Bipartisan Caucus Announced in NYS Legislature

UJP Announces the Upstate Jobs Caucus in Legislature to focus on common sense, bipartisan solutions to problems facing Upstate New York

Albany, NY – The Upstate Jobs Party (UJP) today announced the creation of the new bipartisan Upstate Jobs Caucus in the New York State legislature. This new caucus includes Republicans and Democrats alike, uniting for the first time formally to focus on tackling important issues for Upstate New Yorkers. This new caucus has outlined a clear four-point platform of common-sense issues to address together, without the partisan bickering far too frequently deployed in politics.

This new caucus will be Co-Chaired by Senator Daphne Jordan (R-Halfmoon) and Assemblymember Angelo Santabarbara (D-Rotterdam) and met for the first time just last week.

The Upstate Jobs Caucus will focus on four key issues:

- **Education Reform** – A bureaucratic top-down approach to education has our students stuck in a “college or bust” loop that restricts innovative teachers, hinders skills-based learning, and ultimately gives short shrift to workforce development needs that can help lift up students/employees and local businesses.
- **Economic Development Reform** – New York spends too much money and effort trying to pick winners and losers instead of focusing on issues that can truly help grow economic development, like reliable high-speed broadband across all of Upstate.
- **Supporting the Innovation Economy** – Innovation Economy jobs lift communities up, driving higher job creation multipliers (5:1), and ultimately succeed when intellectual capital meets market demands created by the new economy. Driving awareness of the underutilized Qualified Emerging Technology Company (QETC) tax credit can help spur investment and economic growth.
- **Holistic Government Reform** – Every day shows a greater need for accountability and transparency in government. A State government that is not forthcoming with data and unaccountable to its voters is a failing government. New York needs a true independent JCOPE, election law reform, and a return to a balanced system of checks and balances.

Senator Jordan said, “This new caucus presents the first time Upstate leaders from both parties have united to seek holistic government reform in a bipartisan manner. I’m proud to lead this effort with Assemblymember Santabarbara and so many of our colleagues. We’re ready to roll up our sleeves, reach across the aisle and get this done!”

Assemblyman Santabarbara said, “As Upstate legislators, we share challenges that rise above party lines. From agriculture to tourism, our region provides invaluable resources and unique industries that will be key to building a brighter future for our entire state. I’m eager to work with Senator Jordan and colleagues from both parties to advance a comprehensive agenda this legislative session that takes on the issues facing our upstate communities and builds back our economy stronger than ever.”

While the Caucus membership is expected to grow, the initial members of the Caucus are geographically diverse and bipartisan, including:

- Co-Chair/Senator Daphne Jordan, Republican (Capital Region)

- Co-Chair/Assemblymember Angelo Santabarbara, Democrat, (Capital Region)
- Senator Joe Griffo, Republican (Mohawk Valley), Assistant Minority Leader
- Senator Peter Oberacker, Republican (Mohawk Valley)
- Senator Pam Helming, Republican (Southern Tier)
- Senator Mike Martucci, Republican (Hudson Valley)
- Assemblymember Carrie Woerner, Democrat (Capital Region)
- Assemblymember Marianne Buttenschon, Democrat (Mohawk Valley)
- Assemblymember Billy Jones, Democrat (North Country)
- Assemblymember Al Stirpe, Democrat (Central New York).

During the initial Caucus meeting, members discussed legislative priorities, but also were asked to focus on best practices they can identify in their districts, as well as focusing on local employer needs. The caucus plans to meet regularly to seek common-sense solutions and collaborate on legislative and budgetary matters.

Upstate Jobs Party Founder Martin Babinec said, “The willingness of this bipartisan slate of legislators to work together for change is a critical achievement in efforts to reform state government. We know that we must unite to seek reform within our State government, and these legislators are the dynamic leaders committed to begin that important work.”

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Hoosick Falls railroad tracks in need of repair



There is a section of railroad in Hoosick Falls that was damaged by heavy rains back in 2017. The rails were repaired, but an undersized culvert was not. Since then, the stones have been shifting. Not only is this a safety hazard, but it has also greatly affected travel and could potentially cause a derailment. Thankfully, Rensselaer County Legislators Bruce Patire and Jeff Wysocki reached out to get this issue resolved. They also invited Assemblyman Jake Ashby and me to go see the problem first hand. Hoosick Falls Supervisor Mark Surdam and Rensselaer County Director of Operations Rich Crist also joined us.

Assemblyman Ashby and I sent a letter to the state and federal agencies to expedite the repairs, which I posted below.

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March 17, 2021

Mr. David Fink
President, Pan Am Railways
1700 Iron Horse Park
North Billerica, MA 01862

Honorable Karl Alexy
Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety & Chief Safety Officer
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Honorable Marie Therese Dominguez, Esq.
Commissioner, New York State Department of Transportation
50 Wolf Road
Albany, NY 12232

RE: Requesting repair of Pan Am Southern Railroad tracks and culvert located at Railroad Avenue and Carey Avenue in Hoosick Falls, NY

Dear Mr. Fink, Associate Administrator Alexy, and Commissioner Dominguez:

We are proudly partnering with our colleagues, Rensselaer County Legislator Bruce Patire, 5th District, and Rensselaer County Legislator Jeffrey Wysocki, 5th District, respectively, in writing on an urgent matter of public safety impacting our mutual Rensselaer County constituents.

Specifically, we seek the immediate assistance, intervention, and cooperative effort of Pan Am Railways, along with federal and state government – the Federal Railroad Administration and the New York State Department of Transportation, respectively – in undertaking a long overdue, much-needed, necessary repair of deficient railroad track and culvert located at Railroad Avenue and Carey Avenue in the Village of Hoosick Falls, New York. Fixing this section of railway and

culvert constitutes a serious matter of public safety that must be addressed expeditiously and collectively.

At late and early hours, trains have been observed traveling on these rails beyond the Class-1 speed limit, which is approximately 10 miles per hour for industrial trails and 15 miles per hour for passenger trains, respectively.

Local police have measured the speeds with radar and trains in the evening travel anywhere from 18 to 32 miles per hour. During daytime hours, long trains traveling at slow speeds through the Village of Hoosick Falls create large traffic jams, presenting the potential for a deadly situation. The section of damaged railroad tracks necessitates local vehicle traffic utilizing a greatly reduced speed, causing chronic traffic jams that impact the local community's quality of life.

Furthermore, the resulting back up of traffic flow curtails local first responders' ability to answer a crisis in a timely fashion, thereby inhibiting their ability to effectively protect and serve the community. Because the rail bisects the Village of Hoosick Falls (with the Fire Department on one side, and the Rescue Squad on the other) emergency response teams are forced to go the long way around when time is of the essence. In the event of a serious emergency, such a delay could spell disaster.

The main reason for the deficiencies in this section of railway is due to the culvert underneath the section of rail being over 75 years old and undersized. Over 50 new homes and extended roadways now stand above this section in elevation. The Village of Hoosick Falls added several 18-24" culverts that feed this area and Hoosick Falls Country Club Golf Course also added additional drainage, along with increased storm drains from the Village. All of these lead into the older, inadequately sized culvert under the railway leading to the infrastructure's continued deterioration. A significant rainstorm or snowmelt from another washout (similar to one that occurred in 2017) would further degrade local infrastructure and imperil several local homes located within 40 yards of this section of railway.

Rensselaer County Legislators Patire and Wysocki have previously issued Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests of the State Department of Transportation requesting State DOT's intervention in this matter. We believe that the state, along with Pan Am Railway and the Federal Railroad Administration, must be responsive to this situation, exercise due diligence, and facilitate the requested repair of the identified section of railway, and culvert, to protect local families and the community.

Thank you for your immediate attention to our request seeking your intervention with the necessary repair of Pan Am Southern Railroad tracks, and culvert, located at Railroad Avenue and Carey Avenue in Hoosick Falls, New York.

Sincerely,



Daphne Jordan
State Senator, 43rd District



Jake Ashby
Member of Assembly, 107th District

CC: Rensselaer County Legislator Bruce Patire, 5th District
Rensselaer County Legislator Jeffrey Wysocki, 5th District
Village of Hoosick Falls Mayor Robert Allen
Town of Hoosick Supervisor Mark Surdam

An important message from the Washington County Department of Safety



MASS VACCINATION SITE IN QUEENSBURY SCHEDULING APPTS

One of the state's newest mass vaccination sites is set to open late this week in Queensbury on the campus of the Aviation Mall!

The site went live for appointments on the state's AM I ELIGIBLE site this morning, appointments are available for those eligible and can be made online here:

bit.ly/COVID19_AmIEligible

The Queensbury site is currently showing as stocked with the Pfizer vaccine, which is also a two-dose series - more info on the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine can be found on the CDC's info site here:

bit.ly/PfizerVaccineInfo

Our Washington County, NY Public Health Department team will continue hosting COVID-19 Vaccination clinics and expanding our community vaccination initiatives moving forward, based on vaccine supply and the needs of our communities. Register for our Washington County Vaccine Interest Registry here:

washingtoncountyny.gov/vaccineregistry

OFFICIAL UPDATES FROM WASHINGTON COUNTY

All official updates and information from Washington County will originate from our Public

Health and Public Safety departments and will be posted on our public information page at: washingtoncountyny.gov/coronavirus.

Small business grand opening



Congratulations to [Collar City Mushrooms](#) on their ribbon cutting! My community Liaison, Debbie Curto, represented me at this special event and presented a New York State Senate Certificate of Recognition on my behalf. Collar City Mushrooms is an indoor urban mushroom farm, owned by Avery Stempel, and located in Troy. Click the link above and go check them out!

Movin' on up



My Albany Legislative Office Building (LOB) office moved last week from the fifth floor to the seventh! My staff has more room now and windows stretch across the whole back wall for a spectacular view. I came in over this past weekend to finally have an afternoon to unpack my boxes and get settled. It was a great week in my new space!

City of Hudson State of the Community Event



It was great to be a part of and speak at the “State of the Community” Wednesday night for the City of Hudson, where we talked about projects, initiatives, legislation, and policy that we all are working on this year. I’m glad that we were able to have this bipartisan event with City of Hudson Mayor Kamal Johnson, Congressman Antonio Delgado, Assembly Member Didi Barrett, and HCSD Superintendent Maria Suttmeier, focused on informing the people.

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THE NEW YORK STATE SENATE