

# WINTER 2019 HIGHLIGHTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

## New York Senator Rachel May 53rd State Senate District

### Legislative Highlights

This first quarter of 2019 brought significant progress on several legislative fronts. Among the highlights:

**Electoral reforms**—This long-overdue legislation reforms New York's archaic election laws to make it easier for New Yorkers to vote. New York has an abysmal record of voter turnout—among the worst in the nation—and these reforms bring the state in step with most of the rest of the country. Among other things, the newly passed reforms allow for an early-voting period (currently allowed in 38 states) and pre-registration of minors; impose limits on LLC contributions; and consolidate federal and state primaries to the same day.

**Child Victims Act**—This act extends the statute of limitations for victims of child sexual assault to seek justice. This law was 13 years in the making, and it was gratifying to have it pass unanimously within the first month of the 2019 session.

**Reproductive Health Act**—This act codifies Roe v. Wade protections into state law and ensures access to safe, legal abortion in New York. It maintains the 24-week limit under which women can seek abortions but adds a provision for abortions if the baby would not survive the birth or if it

is deemed medically necessary to protect the mother's life or health. Additional legislation expands contraception coverage and protects access.

Senator May also took the lead in advancing several bills:

- Introducing into the Senate—and winning unanimous approval for—a bill to ban construction of trash incinerators in the Finger Lakes watershed.
- Passing a bill to reduce by 25 percent the number of petition signatures required for a candidate to appear on the ballot in 2019. The measure addresses the shorter window of opportunity for 2019 state and local candidates to gather signatures as a result of new legislation moving the primary date from September to June.
- Co-sponsoring the Climate and Community Protection Act, which sets out to tackle the effects of climate change by cutting greenhouse gases, diverting the state's energy reliance to renewable sources, and creating green jobs. This policy promises to be a win-win, generating environmental protections as well as new economic opportunities.



Dear Friends,

We have had a very busy first four months in the Senate. As part of a historic freshman class that installed a Democratic majority and elevated the first woman ever to Senate Majority Leader, I am honored to represent the 53<sup>rd</sup> Senate District at this exciting time. We have wasted no time in moving through some bills that had been stymied for years, including some common-sense electoral reforms that align the state with most of the rest of the country. But we still have more work ahead to address the complex needs of this richly diverse state. I am grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to take on this important work. And I look forward to keeping you informed of our progress.

Rachel

### A Look Forward - Senator May's Legislative Agenda

**Supporting Caregiving in New York**—This bill would create a new tax credit of up to \$3,500 for qualified caregiving expenses for those providing support to our seniors.

**"Right to Repair" Farm Equipment**—This bill ends corporate monopolies over repairing farm equipment in New York by restoring the right of equipment owners to fair and reasonable self-repair.

**Expanding Renewable Energy**—This bill would declare that each New Yorker has the right to generate, consume and export renewable energy, making our climate more secure.

## 2019-20 Budget News

Following are some of the highlights from the recently passed 2019-2020 state budget:

- An increase in school aid of more than \$1 billion, with 70% of the increased funding going to poorer school districts.
- A total of \$226.5 million dedicated to Upstate transit, with an increase of \$43 million in Statewide Mass Transit Operating Assistance.
- \$500 million in clean-water infrastructure funding.
- A record \$15 million increase in funding for in-home services for the elderly.
- An increase of \$12 million for community colleges as well as installation of a 98% funding floor that will make planning year to year more sustainable.
- \$18 million for Neighborhood and Rural Preservation Corporations.
- \$20 million for a complete statewide census count.
- Funding for implementing election reforms that will help improve voter access.



Sen. May joins with AARP to support seniors funding.

- \$20 million for foreclosure prevention programs.
- Restoring \$550 million in proposed Medicaid cuts as well as \$15.5 million for Population Health Improvement Programs.

## Committee Activity

**The 2019-20 budget included an increase of \$15 million to help fund services allowing seniors to remain in their own homes.**

As chair of the Senate Committee on Aging, Senator May has been working to identify and advocate for the needs of older New Yorkers. She is pleased that the new budget includes a record \$15 million increase to support services that help seniors continue to live in their own homes. The funding will allow area agencies on aging to eliminate their waiting lists and serve everyone in need.

Senator May also will be looking at workforce development strategies to increase the number of home care aides. These aides provide in-home services for older or frail seniors who

want to remain in their homes rather than go into taxpayer-funded institutional care. The need for programs, services and an adequate workforce to address these needs is only going to become more critical as the number of seniors statewide continues to grow.

Senator May also was appointed chair of the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources. She plans to focus the commission's work on connecting farms with institutions such as schools and hospitals, and on issues of rural housing, health care and broadband access.

## Darren "Hal" McCabe Heads Rural Resources Commission

In her capacity as chair of the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources, Senator May named Darren "Hal" McCabe to serve as executive director of that body.

Hal has a long history of advocating for rural issues. He was most recently the director of outreach at NY FarmNet, where he led legislative efforts to help

New York's farmers survive and thrive in today's challenging economy.

Prior to FarmNet, he oversaw nine counties for former Congressman Michael Arcuri. He is a native of Upstate New York and currently serves as mayor of the Village of Homer in Cortland County.



## Local Activities Round-up

Senator May has hosted many events and hearings over the last four months:

**January 25**—A roundtable discussion at Southwest Community Center in Syracuse on the state of after-school programs in the district.

**February 21**—A Senate hearing on the Climate and Community Protection Act, hosted at SUNY-College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

**March 1**—A town hall at Lyncourt Elementary School in Salina focusing on democracy reforms, including early voting, consolidated state and federal primaries and voter preregistration of 16- and 17-year-olds.

**March 9**—A forum hosted by the Healthcare Education Project CNY at the South Side Innova-

tion Center in Syracuse to discuss, among other things, Medicare and Medicaid funding.

**March 22**—Senator May joined Senators Tim Kennedy and Leroy Comrie and Assembly members William Magnarelli and Pamela Hunter for a hearing on Upstate transportation needs.

**April 12**—Senator May welcomed new Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for a tour of the upcoming STEAM school in Syracuse. They were joined by Syracuse Deputy Mayor Sharon Owens and Syracuse City Schools Superintendent Jaime Alicea.

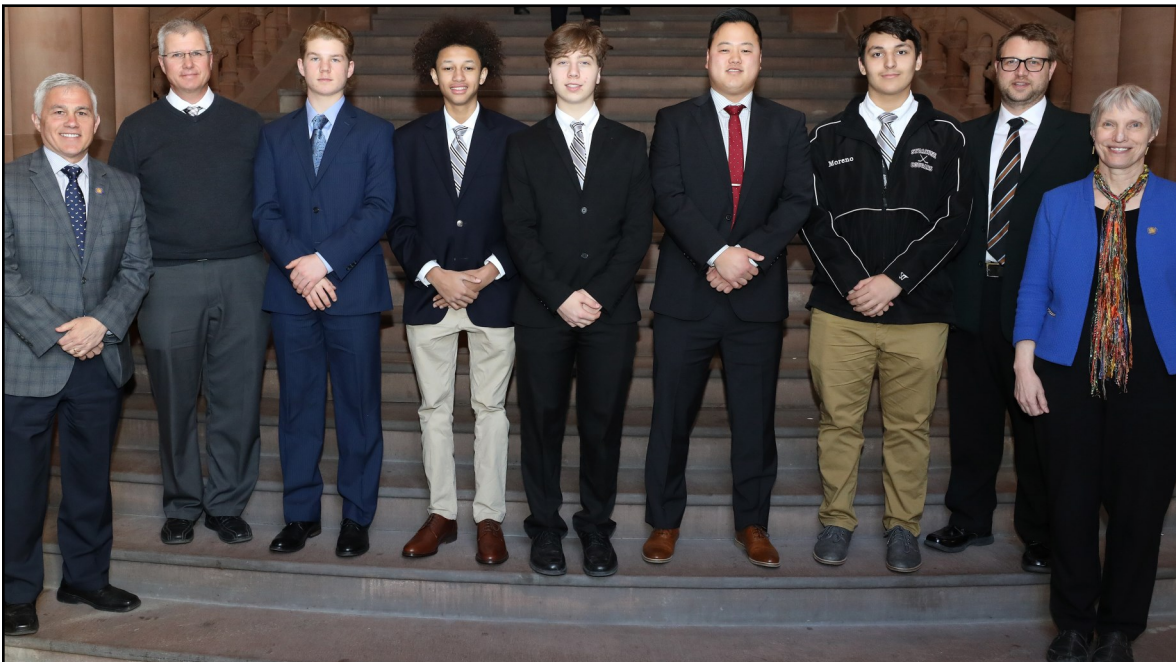
**April 25**—Senator May joined Senators Jen Metzger, Jessica Ramos and Velmanette Montgomery in co-hosting a hearing at SUNY-Morrisville on the Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act.

## Community Recognitions

Senator May sponsored two resolutions recently in the New York State Senate to recognize local constituents. In March, she presented a resolution honoring the **Syracuse Cougars** boys' ice hockey team, based out of Corcoran High School, for winning the 2019 New York State Public High School Athletic Association championship. In February, she recognized **Dina Eldaway**, a senior at Syracuse University, for her selection as a 2019 Marshall Scholar. The scholarship provides funds

for recipients to study in the United Kingdom. Eldaway is the first woman and first Muslim from Syracuse University to receive the distinction.

Locally, Senator May recognized **On Point for College** at its 20th anniversary celebration for its good work in helping young people pursue their aspirations for higher education. She also spoke at an April **naturalization ceremony** for new American citizens.



The Syracuse Cougars and head coach Neal Purcell (second from left) with Senator May.



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  RachelMayNY



Senator May presented a Senate proclamation to constituent John Best in February in honor of his 50 years of service with the DeRuyter Fire Department.

## **We're on the Road!**

This spring, we are bringing New York state government to you, with mobile office hours at various locations throughout the 53rd District. For updates and information on where we will be and when, visit us on the web at [may.nysenate.gov](http://may.nysenate.gov).

## **Elder Law Fair Thursday, May 23 8 a.m.-1:15 p.m.**

**For more information:**  
**[Aarp.cvent.com/ElderLaw2019](http://Aarp.cvent.com/ElderLaw2019)**  
**Or call 1-877-926-8300**

**Go to our website at [may.nysenate.gov](http://may.nysenate.gov) to sign up for our digital newsletter.**