



Dear neighbor:

I hope this Senate District 19 news update finds you safe and carefully enjoying the best of the season.

As the year draws to a close, I pause to extend the warmest holiday greetings to you and your loved ones and to reflect on the many accomplishments we made as a District. 2020 pushed us to our limits and brought changes to how we live and interact with those around us. Ultimately, our spirit of resiliency, camaraderie, harmony, and integrity made us stronger as a community, as a district, and as New Yorkers.

Despite the hardships we faced, we indeed emerged **New York tough**. I was delighted to meet and greet constituents across the community while distributing masks, hand sanitizer, and food items. While it became challenging to hold on-site events, I was delighted to meet many of you on Facebook virtual town hall meetings, workshops, virtual story-time, and other on-line informational events. Your fortitude and will to help others are a reflection of the strength of our Senate District 19.

While we are still embracing this new normal, I will continue providing you with information about services available to you. It is critical to know your COVID-19 status and that of your surrounding

community. Visit <http://forward.ny.gov> for information on statewide or localized public health restrictions to #stopthespread. To find a testing site, visit <http://coronavirus.health.ny.gov> or text "COVID TEST" to 855-48.

In early January 2021, the New York State Senate and Assembly will reconvene for a new Legislative Session. I desire to continue to represent you by introducing and voting upon legislation as well as bringing your needs and views to the forefront effectively.

In closing, I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve you for another term. May your 2021 be safe and bring you days filled with joy and laughter. May peace be a constant friend, and may the love of family and friends be ever present.

Happy Holidays!

Sincerely,

Senator Roxanne J. Persaud  
SD-19



## UPDATES FROM ALBANY

### Get To Know These New 2020 State Laws

**Employment-related transportation expenses for crime victims will now be authorized under a new law sponsored by Senator Persaud.** Effective April 5, 2021, the NYS Office of Victim Services will be authorized to reimburse crime victims for up to \$2,500 of eligible excess employment-related transportation expenses incurred resulting from a crime (Chapter 233, Laws of 2020).



Senator Persaud and constituent rally for stronger investments in SYEP.

**Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) 5-year study.** SYEP creates opportunities for vulnerable youth across the state, with up to 75,000 job placements for NYC youth each summer. SYEP has been a lifeline for many who may not have ready access to employment. Under this new law championed by Senator Persaud and Assemblymember Williams, NYS will be required to generate data and statistics of the program to help policy makers continue to shape future SYEP initiatives (Chapter 297, Laws of 2020).

**All motor vehicle passengers age 16 + must now wear seatbelts in any seat.** As of November 1, 2020, motor vehicle passengers 16 years or older are required to wear a seatbelt while traveling in a motor vehicle, even if sitting in the rear seat (Chapter 136, Laws of 2020).

**Canceling gym memberships and other automatic renewal and continuous service plans.** Effective February 9, 2021, New Yorkers entering auto-renew and continuous service plans, like gym memberships, will be entitled to additional disclosures and clearly defined means to cancel such contracts and plans (Chapter 267, Laws of 2020).

**Juneteenth is now an official New York State holiday.** Annually, June 19th or "Juneteenth" is a day to celebrate Black and African American freedom and accomplishments. Blacks and African Americans have and continue to play pivotal roles in shaping our Empire State (Chapter 249, Laws of 2020).

**Abolition Commemoration Day is also an official New York State Holiday.** To be observed annually on the second Monday of July, Abolition Commemoration Day marks the date that New York State officially abolished slavery: July 4, 1827. We will honor those who made the abolition movement possible remember those known or unknown that suffered during or as a result of Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (Chapter 237, Laws of 2020).

**Adding a legal occupant to your NYCHA lease.** Effective December 20, 2020, The NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA) will need to inform current and prospective tenants about how to add legal occupants to their leases. NYCHA is to make sure that current and future tenants have ready access forms to add legal occupants when needed (Chapter 171, laws of 2020).

**Language Accessible Housing Court Documents.** Effective April 5, 2021, the Office of Court Administration will be required to circulate certain NYC housing court documents in the seven most common languages spoken in the city. Providing such documents will remove barriers experienced by New Yorkers with limited English proficiency (Chapter 223, Laws of 2020).

**Clear eviction defense for tenants that have deducted water utility payments made on behalf of a neglectful landlord from rental payments.** Previously, certain tenants became subject to costly eviction proceedings for alleged non-payment of rent because the law lacked a clear defense consistent with comparable situations, such as a tenant paying an electric bill for which the landlord was responsible (Chapter 143, Laws of 2020).



## SENATOR PERSAUD'S LEGISLATION NOT YET SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR

**Child welfare data reporting (S8421-A).** This legislation would establish reporting requirements for the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to collect data on the utilization and effectiveness of child welfare preventive services throughout the state.

## SENATOR PERSAUD'S HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES PRIORITIES FOR 2021-2022 SESSION

**Affordable diapers for children up to age 2 (S1086-B).** Under this legislation, TANF-eligible parents could apply for a quarterly allowance to assist with purchasing diapers for their children up to two years of age. Babies and toddlers require frequent diaper changes, and having an inadequate supply of diapers can lead to serious health issues.

**Expand SNAP purchasing options (S7290-A).** Many SNAP beneficiaries are unable to prepare or cook food due to physical limitations or lack of a kitchen. S7290-A would require the state to pursue a federal waiver which, if granted, would allow certain seniors, people with disabilities and homeless New Yorkers to use their SNAP benefits to buy prepared food from participating food service establishments at discounted rates.

**Banning virginity testing (S6879).** Virginity tests are reportedly still common throughout the US. This violation of women's and girls' human rights can result in life-long physical, psychological and social consequences. Both the World Health Organization and U.N. Women have called for a global ban.

**Self-sufficiency standard study (S5552-A).** New York needs comprehensive data to help policy makers address poverty using up-to-date statewide information and statistics. S5552-A would require the NYS Department of Labor to contract with a qualified vendor to produce such study every two years.

**Codify definition of "kinship caregiver" (S8332).** Some 180,000 New Yorkers provide foster care to members of their own family or community, and many access services from state and local agencies to keep their growing families healthy and intact. Establishing a definition of Kinship Caregiver in the NYS Social Services Law would clarify differing interpretations of the current law to better facilitate services.

**Refinancing options for homeowners facing foreclosure (S5124).** Under this proposal, the foreclosing party in a residential foreclosure would be required to offer a refinancing opportunity to the mortgagor (homeowner). If a homeowner is able to refinance, it can help them secure a more manageable payment, and hopefully prevent foreclosure.

## Happening In and Around SD-19



**Senator Persaud and staff with a group of SD 19 Power 19 Ceremony honorees.**

**Annual SD19 Power19 Ceremony.** On Saturday, November 14, 2020, Senator Persaud continued upon an annual tradition in holding a ceremony to honor 19 distinguished individuals who live and/or work in SD 19. We thank this exemplary group of New Yorkers for their selfless contributions to our SD 19 community: Nasim Almontaser, Dep. Dir., Yemeni American Merchants · Astrid Benjamin, R.N. · Christa Blasi, human resources professional · Monique Brock, nurse practitioner · Shella Bosse Desir, healthcare professional · Collette Clarke-Hinds, R.N. · Principal Maxine Cameron, P.S. 13 Roberto Clemente · Caprio Desir, MTA bus operator · Principal Yvette Donald, P.S. 149 Danny Kaye · Suzann Gonzalez, health practice office manager · Kajuan Hall, youth public health program administrator · Camara Jackson, Executive Director, Elite Learners · Principal Gregory Jackson Jr., Brownsville Collaborative Middle School · Simone C. Martin, elder care professional · Principal Sharon Porter, P.S. 6 Norma Adams Clemons Academy · Kemma Roguier, clinical health coach · Ruperto Sanchez, public health center custodian · David Senatore, NYC DOE REC site supervisor · Anthony Tesoriero, public health center security guard.



**Senator Persaud and SD19 Power 19 Honorees.**

**Summer essay contest for middle school students.** Over the summer, Senator Persaud opened an essay-writing contest for middle school students. These young writers were asked to describe their inability to attend school and how COVID-19 has impacted their lives. Senator Persaud received fantastic essays from students across SD 19 as well as a student in India! Senator Persaud is proud to honor Dylan Dufour, of I.S. 96 - Seth Low Middle School, as the winner of this contest. Many congratulations Dylan!

**Annual Canarsie Holiday Light Display & Celebration** (Flatlands Ave. at E. 93rd St.). While this year's Canarsie neighborhood holiday celebration could not safely take place, the Annual Holiday Light Display, a tradition since 1963, will be illuminated through Three Kings Day on Wednesday, January 6, 2021. We may not be able to gather as a community at this time, but we can still enjoy this seasonal tradition from the safety of your car, or from across the street. Do wear your mask.



**Senator Persaud and Rep. Hakeem Jeffries attend 69th Precinct National Night Out.**

**Attention Verrazano-Narrows Bridge users:** as of Tuesday, December 1, 2020, two-way "split" tolling will be restored to the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge for the first time since 1986. What does this mean? *One-way tolls will be charged in both directions instead of motorists paying a single, larger, westbound-only toll.* As such, E-Z Pass tag holders will be charged \$6.12 each way for a round-trip total of \$12.24. Those without an E-Z Pass will be billed \$9.50 each way for a round-trip total of \$19.00 (pay via Tolls-by-Mail). Similar two-way or split toll rates apply for Staten Island commuter plan enrollees. Visit <http://new.mta.info> for additional details.



# Seeking Assistance During These Challenging Times

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought front and center the challenges that New Yorkers face, particularly seniors, people of color, people with disabilities, youth, and those living in already difficult circumstances. If you are struggling during this time and have not sought assistance, below are a range of resources that may be of help to you and your family. Many have had to ask for help this year for the first time in their lives. To learn more about what benefits may be available to you and your family, visit <http://findservices.ny.gov>. For information about employment and rent assistance, visit [www.nyc.gov/helpnow](http://www.nyc.gov/helpnow). Additionally, free financial counseling is available at [www.nyc.gov/talkmoney](http://www.nyc.gov/talkmoney).

**Don't go hungry this winter.** The City of New York continues to operate hundreds of Grab-and-Go sites throughout all Boroughs. No ID required, no questions asked. To find the closest Grab-and-Go site or food pantry, visit [www.nyc.gov/getfoodmap](http://www.nyc.gov/getfoodmap) or call 311. For information on additional services for individuals who are homebound and do not have existing private food delivery options, visit [www.nyc.gov/getfood](http://www.nyc.gov/getfood) or dial 311.

**Weekly emergency food distribution events.** Since early Spring, Senator Persaud has collaborated with various community partners to host weekly food distribution events at various sites and centers throughout SD 19. Information on upcoming events can be found on the Senator's website events calendar: <http://persaud.nysenate.gov>, on Facebook @ SD19SenatorPersaud or by calling (718) 649-7653.

Have you applied for **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** benefits? Your household may be eligible for SNAP and other assistance programs. To apply visit <http://access.nyc.gov> or <http://mybenefits.ny.gov>.

**Parents of school-aged children:** if you received Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) benefits on a special card issued in 2020 by the State of New York, **do not throw this card out!** This card may be needed to access future benefits.

**Immigrant New Yorkers: Know Your Rights.** If you have a concern, please call the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) **ActionNYC** hotline at (800) 354-0365 to receive free and safe assistance.

**Are you in need of health coverage?** Eligible New Yorkers can apply to obtain health coverage through New York's Official Health Plan Marketplace through Sunday, January 31, 2021. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency, coverage for New Yorkers already enrolled in Medicaid, Child Health Plus, or the Essential Plan will continue automatically. Apply at <http://nystateofhealth.ny.gov>.

**Domestic and gender-based violence.** Help and safety are available 24/7 for you and your family. You do not have to go through this difficult time alone.

- NYC HRA 24-hour hotline: (800) 621-HOPE.
- NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV) hotline: (800) 942-6906.
- **Discrete** text messaging: (844) 997-2121 or online chat: <http://opdv.ny.gov>
- LGBTQA New Yorkers: (212) 714-1141 (NYC Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project)
- New Yorkers with Disabilities: (212) 533-4358 (Barrier-Free Living)



**Keep your heat on.** The **Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)** heating season began on November 2, 2020. Income-eligible New Yorkers have two main options for applying: (1) online via <http://mybenefits.ny.gov> or (2) via mail. If you live in New York City, download an application from <http://access.nyc.gov> and mail (or fax) the signed application to the address (or number) specified by HRA. Note: individuals or households seeking additional Emergency HEAP benefits may apply after January 4, 2021.

**Emotional & mental wellness supports.** NYC Well provides 24/7 brief counseling services and gives referrals to mental health and substance abuse services in over 200 languages. Call: (888) NYC-WELL or (888) 692-9355. Text: "WELL" to 65173. Chat: <http://nyc.gov/nycwell>. Services are also available through the NY Project HOPE / Office of Mental Health (NYS OMH) **COVID-19 Emotional Support Helpline:** (844) 863-9314, 8:00 a.m - 10:00 p.m., 7 days a week.

If you or a family member become ill with COVID-19 and cannot safely isolate or quarantine in your home, you may be eligible for services through the **NYC Health + Hospitals Self-Isolation Hotel Program.** To inquire, call 311 or (844) NYC-4NYC or (844) 692-4692.

**Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC)** is a program administered by the New York State Department of Health for income-eligible seniors aged 65 and older. Every year, EPIC assists nearly 330,000 seniors with a supplement to their out-of-pocket Medicare Part D drug plan expenses. Call (800) 332-3742, TTY (800) 290-9138 or visit <http://health.ny.gov>.

**Do you have your REAL ID-compliant license or non-driver id?** Beginning October 1, 2021, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security will require a Real ID-compliant driver's license or photo ID in order to board all domestic flights within the continental United States, unless you have a valid passport. The law also covers entry to federal buildings, military bases and other facilities.

**Do you receive public assistance and cannot pay for a non-driver ID?** Under a new state law, New Yorkers who receive public assistance benefits and/or are age 62 and older receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), are able to obtain a standard or Real ID-compliant non-driver ID card at no cost from the NYS DMV. Applications for new non-driver IDs must be submitted in person at a NYS DMV office. Appointment reservations are required at this time. Visit: <http://dmv.ny.gov>.



*The Office of Senator Roxanne J. Persaud (SD 19) proudly serves constituents in the communities of Canarsie, East New York, Brownsville, Mill Basin, Sheepshead Bay, Bergen Beach, Marine Park, Flatlands, Mill Island, Georgetown, Ocean Hill, and Starrett City.*

*For more information, visit Senator Roxanne J. Persaud's official website: <http://persaud.nysenate.gov>. To stay updated on events and meetings, be sure to check out the Senate District 19 Calendar. If you are in need of assistance or would like to sign up for our weekly e-newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact us at (718) 649-7653 or email [persaud@nysenate.gov](mailto:persaud@nysenate.gov). Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, district office hours are by appointment only. Please direct appointment requests to (718) 649-7653 or [senatorpersaud@gmail.com](mailto:senatorpersaud@gmail.com).*





**A GREAT BIG THANK YOU TO OUR FOOD DISTRIBUTION PARTNERS** including, but certainly not limited to: *The Campaign Against Hunger (TCAH), Food Bank for New York City, City Harvest, Met Council, Nourish NY, GetFoodNYC, your networks of suppliers, distributors, warehouses as well as your delivery and logistics personnel. You have moved mountains in service of fellow New Yorkers.*



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**NEW YORK STATE SENATOR**  
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19TH SENATE DISTRICT

**Winter**  
**2020**

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SD19SenatorPersaud

@SenatorPersaud



*Senator Persaud and constituent participate in a panel discussion on K-12 student needs.*



# NYLAG

New York | Legal Assistance Group

**Save the date!** Senator Persaud is proud to collaborate with the **New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)** to provide remote legal consultation and assistance to constituents. Appointments are available on the following dates: Thursday January 21, 2021, Thursday March 11, 2021, and Wednesday May 5, 2021. Please call Senator Persaud's district office to request an appointment: (718) 649-7653. Additionally, NYLAG has a hotline for NYC residents impacted by COVID-19. Call (929) 356-9582, Monday - Friday between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. or visit [www.nylag.org/hotline/](http://www.nylag.org/hotline/).

*Senator Persaud meets with members of the East New York Brooklyn Collaborative in Albany.*