

News from Senator George M. Borrello

57th Senate District

Representing Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and portions of Livingston County

For Release: Immediate, November 20, 2021

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SEN. BORRELLO'S NOURISH NY BILL SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOV. HOCHUL

Farm-to-Foodbank Program Feeds NY's Families and Protects Farmers

Bi-partisan legislation highlights upstate/downstate partnership

QUEENS – Legislation sponsored by Sen. George Borrello to make the Nourish New York farm-to-foodbank program permanent was signed into law by Gov. Kathy Hochul Saturday during a ceremony at the New York Hall of Science in Cornona, Queens.

“I want to thank Gov. Hochul for signing this legislation,” Sen. Borrello said. “As the grandson of Concord grape farmers, I couldn’t be happier or more proud that Nourish New York is now established as part of state law. It will ensure surplus food from New York’s farms goes to New Yorkers in need, so they can feed their families.

“The pandemic laid bare the fragile nature of our food supply chain in New York. It also gave us an opportunity to unite and address it. By strengthening the connection between New York agriculture and our food banks with a consistent, recurring program that farmers can plan for and food banks can count on, we can create a resilient program to the benefit of farms and families in need across our state.

“This is a victory for New York’s farmers and New York’s families who struggle to put food on the table. Nourish New York ensures that never again will surplus food from farms be thrown away or left to rot while New Yorkers go hungry.”

A bi-partisan effort, Nourish New York was supported by Democrats and Republicans in the Senate and Assembly. The bill received unanimous approval from both houses of the Legislature.

Sen. Borrello, Ranking Member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and Agriculture Committee Chair Sen. Michelle Hinchey co-prime sponsored Nourish New York in the Senate while Assembly members Catalina Cruz, Assembly Agriculture Committee Chair Donna Lupardo, and Chris Tague, Ranking Member of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture, championed the legislation in the Assembly.

Sen. Borrello joined Gov. Hochul, Sen. Hinchey and Assemblywoman Cruz and Assemblyman Tague for the signing ceremony Saturday in Assemblywoman Cruz’ Queen’s district. Gov. Hochul signed Nourish New York following a free Thanksgiving food giveaway at the La Jornada Food Pantry. Sen. Borrello joined Assemblywoman Cruz in helping hand out over 7,000 Thanksgiving meals to needy families.

“Special thanks goes to Sen. Michelle Hinchey, who advocated tirelessly as Senate Agriculture Chair for Nourish New York. I was proud to be co-prime sponsor with her on this legislation,” Sen. Borrello said. “None of this would have been possible without our partners in the Assembly, Catalina Cruz, Donna Lupardo and Chris Tague.”

Assemblywoman Cruz (D-Queens) said Nourish New York is not only right for New York’s farmers and food-insecure families, it’s also an efficient and cost-effective program.

"Nourish New York has proven to be a fiscally responsible success in addressing food insecurity, assisting our farmers and connecting upstate and downstate economies," Assemblywoman Cruz said. "I watched helplessly as my constituents were the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. My district already suffered from food insecurity issues long before we became the 'epicenter of the epicenter.' This program is a win-win for all parties. The upstate agricultural industry, also hit hard by the pandemic, receives a financial lifeline, while those in the state who need it most can count on receiving their next meal.

"I am honored to sponsor this bill alongside Senators Borrello and Hinchey, and am eternally grateful for their partnership. Lastly, I want to extend my deepest appreciation to the Governor for signing into law this incredibly important and truly life-saving piece of legislation."

Sen. Hinchey (D-Kinston) said Nourish New York is the definition of a strong upstate/downstate partnership.

"Nourish New York brilliantly demonstrates what's possible when we work together to deliver a life-sustaining service for New Yorkers who have fallen on hard times while simultaneously sparking food system innovation. This is what good government looks like, and I am incredibly proud that our bill to uplift this initiative as a permanent state program has finally been signed into law," Sen. Hinchey said. "During one of the darkest moments our state has ever faced, Nourish New York was a beacon of compassionate, bipartisan support addressing the devastating surge in food insecurity and providing upstate farmers, who were struggling to stay in business, with a new avenue to continue feeding our communities — a win-win framework in every sense of the word.

"It was an honor to work in partnership with Assembly member Catalina Cruz, Assembly member Donna Lupardo, and Sen. George Borrello to make Nourish a permanent program fixture in New York. I thank Gov. Hochul for signing this important piece of legislation into law and look forward to forging more upstate/downstate coalitions to ensure that no New Yorker is left behind."

While Nourish New York's roots were founded in the economic hardships that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic and New York's lockdown, it quickly became a lifeline for food insecure New Yorkers as well as struggling farmers.

"Nourish New York is proof that people of good will can come together and pass common-sense legislation that benefits everyone," Sen. Borrello said. "This has nothing to do with party politics or grandstanding to score political points. This is about doing what's right to save our farms and feed New York's families.

"Because of Nourish New York, 4,200 New York farms provided nourishing, New York-produced food to over 1.3 million households in need during the pandemic. Millions of pounds of food shipments were sent to New York City from upstate farms during the pandemic. It was one of the few silver linings of the COVID crisis, one of the most challenging times in our state's history."

When longstanding supply chains failed, the Nourish New York program built new ones between rural farms and urban food banks, helping countless families in the process.

To learn more about Nourish New York, please visit: <https://agriculture.ny.gov/NourishNY>.

PHOTO CUTLINES:

Nourish New York Picture 1

Photo provided

Gov. Kathy Hochul signs Nourish New York into law, codifying it as a permanent state program as Sen. George Borrello, Assemblyman Chris Tague, Sen. Michelle Hinchey and Assemblywoman Catalina Cruz and the bill's supporters look on.

Nourish New York Picture 2

Photo provided

Shown left to right, Assemblyman Chris Tague, Assemblywoman Catalina Cruz and Sen. George Borrello, at Saturday's Nourish New York bill signing by Gov. Kathy Hochul. The legislators championed Nourish New York in the Senate and Assembly to establish the farm to foodbank initiative as a permanent New York State program.

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