

NJ THIRD DISTRICT

Newsletter

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Landmark Job Creation Legislation Passes the Senate

In September, the Senate passed several pieces of legislation aimed to assist the growth of New Jersey businesses and to help create jobs. This bill package includes several tax credit incentive programs for businesses, which are intended to jumpstart the state economy and work to lower New Jersey's unemployment rate, which is still above the national average.

"The people of this state need employment opportunities and our small businesses need investment. The time to act is now. These bills assist in creating a climate that puts people back to work and steadies our trembling economy. By implementing these measures, we can begin to turn back the tide of our slumping economy and make New Jersey a powerhouse and example to the rest of the country," said Senate President Steve Sweeney.

Among the bills passed by the Senate and sponsored by the Senator, was legislation that would exempt business facilities that employ

at least 50 people, at least 50 percent of whom are directly employed in a manufacturing process, from one-half of the tax imposed under the Sales and Use Tax Act on the retail sale of energy and utility services that are consumed exclusively at that facility, in an effort to boost New Jersey's manufacturing industry.

"Getting people back to work is our main priority right now. Businesses want to hire folks, but they just don't have the ability or incentive to do so right now. By providing these kinds of tax breaks, we can spur both job growth and economic development," said Senator Sweeney.

A second bill in the package would expand certain corporation business tax credit programs to the gross income tax, providing gross income taxpayers with the same incentives available to corporation business taxpayers for investment and hiring, particularly sole proprietors, partnerships, and limited liability companies. *Article continues on Page 2.*

State Pension and Health Benefits Reforms Produce \$267 Million in Property Tax Relief in First Year



Legislation passed in June to reform the New Jersey state pension and health benefits systems has already begun to yield results, with municipalities, counties, and school districts across New Jersey saving a combined \$267 million in Fiscal Year 2012. This includes \$224 million in local taxpayer savings from the Police and Fireman's Retirement System (PFRS), as well as \$43 million in savings in the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS).

"I am very pleased to see the immediate results of the pension and benefits reform measures that were enacted in June," said Senate President Sweeney. "The purpose of these reforms was, and always has been, the relief that

they will provide to New Jersey taxpayers. These figures serve as evidence that not only were we able to arrive at bipartisan compromise to ensure the long-term viability of the state pension and health benefits systems, but we have also begun to provide desperately needed property tax relief for all New Jersey residents."

The legislation sponsored by Senator Sweeney made a number of changes to the state pension and benefits systems, and are expected to save New Jersey taxpayers more than \$120 billion over the next 30 years. Several municipalities, school districts, and other local government units within the Third Legislative District have already realized significant savings as a result of this legislation.

Assemblywoman Riley's Domestic Violence Bill is Signed into Law



Legislation, sponsored by Assemblywoman Celeste Riley, that strengthens protections for domestic violence victims recently passed both houses of

the Legislature and was signed by the Governor on November 10.

The law adds offenses involving a violation of a domestic violence restraining order to the list of crimes with bail restrictions, which would prevent violators from using the 10 percent cash option for posting bail. It unanimously passed the Senate on September 26.

According to the National Coalition

Against Domestic Violence, an estimated 1.3 million women are victims of physical assault by an intimate partner each year. With 85 percent of domestic violence victims being women, it's estimated that one in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime.

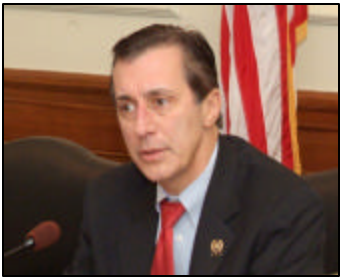
"Domestic violence and sexual assault are a real and pervasive threat to residents throughout our state," said Assemblywoman Riley. "Given the emotional and physical trauma that victims have already been subjected to, they should be able to receive some measure of comfort knowing our laws do everything possible to protect their safety in the future."

Recently, the Assemblywoman was honored by Salem County Women's Services with its "Person of the Year" award

in recognition of her legislative efforts on behalf of domestic violence and sexual assault victims. The non-profit agency, founded in 1987, offers numerous services including emergency shelter, individual counseling, and educational programs.

"I am tremendously honored and humbled by this recognition from an organization that does such extraordinary work on behalf of our residents," said Assemblywoman Riley. "Collectively through strengthening laws and offering the type of support services provided by Salem County Women's Services and others throughout the state, we are protecting and empowering women who are in difficult and painful circumstances."

Red Tape Group Continues Work of Simplifying State Regulations



When the Legislature returns to session this fall, Deputy Speaker

Burzichelli plans to continue advancing legislation that will help to cut red tape and burdensome regulations that stifle the business climate of New Jersey.

Assemblyman Burzichelli serves on the Red Tape Review Commission, a nine-member group, chaired by Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno. The Commission is charged with reviewing state regulatory barriers. Often these

barriers originate from layers of regulations compiled over decades by legislation that may overlap or conflict. The group's purpose is to clear away rules and regulations that make it difficult to do business in New Jersey, yet uphold those regulations that protect the health and public safety of our residents.

The Red Tape Review Commission's most recent public meeting was held in Atlantic City in September. The main topics of discussion were obsolete environmental regulations and pending legislation that would repeal the "New Jersey Limited Liability Company Act" and introduce a more modern regulatory scheme for the creation and operation of limited liability companies in New Jersey.

"Time and time again we witness the

unnecessary burden of heavy regulation in our state," said Assemblyman Burzichelli. "The Red Tape Review Commission continues to listen to regulatory concerns expressed by our residents and businesses and work towards addressing these issues in a discerning fashion."

In addition to this commission, the Assemblyman serves as chair of the Regulatory Oversight and Gaming Committee (ARG) which allows an additional avenue to amend rules and directives. Priorities for ARG include strengthening the Gaming industry of Atlantic City and addressing the cumbersome permitting process of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

Bipartisan Legislation Seeks to Motivate Economic Growth in NJ

Continued from Page 1.

Other bills call for the establishment of the Grow New Jersey Assistance Program to provide tax credits to certain businesses, legislation that allows corporation business tax and gross income tax credits to businesses providing employment to certain National Guard members or reservists, and legislation permitting small women or minority

owned businesses located in designated regional centers to qualify for Economic Development Authority loans.

New concepts include a Hospital Facility Grant Program and the establishment of a Small Business Loan Program, where businesses of 10 to 99 employees would be eligible for two percent interest rate loans of up to \$250,000 to expand their enterprise, if

the business commits to increasing overall employment by at least 10 percent.

"The bipartisan manner in which we are moving these bills forward is very encouraging," said Senator Sweeney. "We all agree that these kinds of incentives can help move the economy forward and we look forward to the Governor's support in these efforts."

Legislation Benefits Local Wineries and Increases Consumer Choice

The following are excerpts from a Letter to the Editor written by the Third District legislators in support of Senate bill 766/Assembly bill 1702. It appeared in the Today's Sunbeam on August 22.

Millions of Americans in 38 states enjoy the simple pleasure of being able to order wine directly from the vineyard where it was grown and have it safely and securely shipped to their homes. Unfortunately, many New Jersey wine consumers, and even fewer out-of-state wine consumers, are unable to enjoy all the great wines being produced in the Garden State because New Jersey law prohibits wine to be shipped to New Jersey residents.

Earlier this year, we introduced bipartisan legislation that would change New Jersey's law to allow for direct shipping of wine to New Jersey residents from small wineries only. This legislation levels the playing field by allowing small wineries both in-state and out-of-state to operate outlets and sell directly to consumers in New Jersey.

The growth of the state's wine industry from just a handful of wineries a dozen years ago to more than 50 today, ranking our state seventh in the nation for total wine production, is a New Jersey success story. (However), many of the state's wineries are located in rural areas, and do not produce enough wine per year to have business relationships with wholesalers. This makes their retail outlets and tasting rooms, as well as a few wine festivals held throughout the year, the only way for wine consumers to purchase their products. New Jersey's ban on direct shipping has

caused the state's wine industry to be uncompetitive with other wineries, and suffer a significant loss of potential business.

New Jersey's wine wholesalers and retailers who oppose direct shipping would have you believe that enactment of this legislation will harm their businesses, destroy the state's three-tier system of purchasing alcohol and contribute to job losses and a rise in underage drinking. Nothing could be further from the truth. No evidence exists in the 38 states which permit direct shipping to support these false claims.

Our legislation is a win for New Jersey's economy and consumers. It guarantees the future growth of the New Jersey wine industry by providing access to a national market, which otherwise would not be possible. A vibrant and growing wine-making industry in New Jersey provides jobs, preserves farmland and serves as a basis for agri-tourism.

Wine consumers will continue to visit their local liquor store to pick up their favorite wines. However, for the consumers looking for wine not available at their local retailer, we ask they be provided the ability to have that wine shipped to their homes from the small wineries in New Jersey, and throughout the nation.

This legislation is the bill of choice for our wine consumers, and New Jersey wine growers. We urge our colleagues in the Legislature to stand up with New Jersey wine consumers and our state's wine industry and pass our legislation.

Senate President Sweeney, Assemblyman Burzichelli, and Assemblywoman Riley.

Promotion of "Jersey Fresh" Foods Helps Residents Eat Healthier



Recently, legislation Assemblywoman Celeste Riley sponsored to help promote food products and commodities grown or raised in New Jersey was signed into law.

The law encourages the purchase of "Jersey Fresh" and other New Jersey agricultural products by state agencies, departments, and facilities. "This bill simply requires the state, whenever possible, to provide enhanced visibility and accessibility to "Jersey Fresh," "Jersey Grown," and "Made with Jersey Fresh" baked goods when entering into or renewing a contract by state agencies," said the Assemblywoman.

"Jersey Fresh" is an advertising and promotional program developed by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture in 1983 to draw consumer attention to the availability of New Jersey farm products.

A second piece of legislation, sponsored by Riley, which passed both

houses and is awaiting the Governor's signature is the "New Jersey Fresh Mobiles Initiative." This initiative would establish a network of farmers' markets to travel to "food desert" communities.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, more than 23 million people in the United States live in food deserts—urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food. In Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem counties there are twenty-one such locations.

"The lack of access to fresh and affordable food leads to poor diets resulting in illnesses, such as diabetes and heart disease," said Assemblywoman Riley. "This legislation would provide nutritious food, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, to underserved communities in desperate need."

The initiative also includes a voucher system that would allow low-income residents to buy fresh food at a discount.

Due to Assemblyman Burzichelli's efforts the first "Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week" was celebrated by schools throughout the state the week of September 26 through September 30, 2011.

The week's promotion of the value and importance of New Jersey's agriculture and fresh foods for children was the result of legislation sponsored by the Assemblyman and signed into law this past January.

The measure also calls for the New Jersey Department of Agriculture to create a bidding matrix that will encourage schools to purchase "Jersey Fresh" by providing price preferentials for local agricultural and farm products.

"By encouraging our schools to purchase locally, we help farmers stay on their land and provide a boost to the state's estimated \$1.12 billion agricultural industry," said Assemblyman Burzichelli.

District Spotlight: City of Bridgeton Hosts Swedish Ambassador



On September 24, the City of Bridgeton welcomed the Swedish Ambassador to the United States, Jonas Hafstrom, as a special guest. Ambassador Hafstrom visited the City to support the New Sweden Colonial Farmstead project, an open-air museum that pays tribute to the area's founding by settlers in the New Sweden colony in the Delaware Valley in the late 1600s. The site was originally constructed in the 1980s as a

two acre site within the city's park and includes seven log cabins that were built to show an authentic representation of the early settlers' homedwellings.

Supporters of the site are presently working to restore portions of the twenty-five year old log cabins in advance of the 375th Anniversary of Swedish settlement in New Jersey to be held in 2013. The City itself is celebrating its 325th Anniversary this year.

The restorations will pave the way for the living history museum and

center to be used as an educational site to hold cultural festivals, programs, exhibits, and reenactments. Bridgeton City plans to rededicate the site and open its new programming in two years time whereby it looks forward to the possibility of another royal visitation. The site's dedication in 1988 included a visit to Bridgeton by Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia.

Please visit the project's website www.newswedenfarmstead.org to learn more about ways to support the New Sweden Colonial Farmstead.

Historian Janet Sheridan Honored for Marshalltown Preservation

Senate President Steve Sweeney recently recognized the work and achievements of Salem County resident Janet Sheridan, a three-time New Jersey Historical Commission grant recipient who is diligently working towards the goal of including Marshalltown in Mannington on the National Register of Historic Places.

A state commendation was presented to Ms. Sheridan at Mt. Zion African Union Methodist Protestant Church in Marshalltown honoring her tireless efforts in securing the historical acknowledgement for the small settlement, which was known as one of the first free African-American communities and may have played a role in the notorious Underground Railroad. Her recent work also made it possible for Marshalltown to be included on Preservation New Jersey's 10 Most Endangered Historic Sites of 2011.

"Salem County is fortunate to have such a rich cultural past and residents like Ms. Sheridan make it possible for us to remember and preserve vital parts of this history," said the Senator. "She is to be commended for devoting her time and energy to researching and documenting how a place like Marshalltown played such a significant role in the Emancipation Movement."

The project, which included researching, surveying, and documenting the site, has received grants totaling \$23,000 from the New Jersey Historical Commission. The nomination application will be submitted for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places at the end of the year.

If anyone would like to share information pertaining to Marshalltown Janet Sheridan may be contacted at 856-469-4116 or by email at jlsheridan@verizon.net.



Pictured from left to right: Mayor of Mannington Don Asay, Senator Sweeney, and Janet Sheridan.

Constituent Resource Corner: How to Find Unclaimed Property in NJ

As part of a statewide initiative to return unclaimed property to the rightful owner the Third District legislators encourage residents to review the state's listing of unclaimed property.

The National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators cite that state treasurers and other agencies hold 117 million accounts, totaling over \$33 billion dollars of unclaimed property. Unclaimed property could be dormant bank accounts, leftover insurance

money, stock dividends or other intangible personal property held by corporations and other which must, by law, be turned over to the appropriate state government if gone unclaimed.

Every month the state treasurer updates a database of names in an attempt to locate owners and return unclaimed property. The list details the names and last known address of individuals having accounts at banks and other financial services institutions. To view the list and

claims process information visit the Department of Treasury website at www.unclaimedproperty.nj.gov.

"It is important for residents to understand that this is a free government service and does not require residents to pay for anything," said Assemblywoman Riley. "When filing a claim be sure to provide all necessary identification which will speed the process for receiving your property."