

THIRD DISTRICT'S MONTHLY UPDATE FROM TRENTON

SEN. SWEENEY, ASM. BURZICHELLI, ASM. TALIAFERRO

March 2017

Legislators Welcome First Ship to Paulsboro Marine Terminal



Senate President Sweeney, Assembly Deputy Speaker Burzichelli, and Assemblyman Taliaferro were on hand Thursday, March 2 to observe and celebrate the opening of the Paulsboro Marine Terminal with the docking of the first ship. The opening is the result of over a decade of work and cooperation between the Borough of Paulsboro, the Gloucester County Improvement Authority, and the State of New Jersey. The Terminal is operated by Holt Logistics, and in its current capacity employs 40 to 50 people. That number is expected to grow to at least 200 or more as it takes on more tenants and becomes fully functional. The first ship to dock at the Terminal, the *Doric Warrior*, unloaded 55,000 tons of steel slabs for NLMK USA, an international steel company and the Terminal's first tenant. The slabs will be loaded on to rail cars and transported to NLMK's mills in Pennsylvania and Indiana. Additional construction is scheduled, expanding the current 850-foot wharf by 1600 feet and two additional berths. Additional tenants are expected to be announced in the coming weeks.

Senate President Sweeney Introduces Legislation to Expand Paid Family Leave

Senate President Sweeney recently introduced legislation to expand New Jersey's Paid Family Leave Law, the successful program that allows employees to take time from work to care for newborn children or for sick family members.

Under the expanded proposal, which would go into effect July 1, 2018, the number of weeks of benefits would be extended from six to 12 in any one-year period and, in cases of intermittent leave, the maximum number of days is increased from 42 to 84. The weekly benefits would increase from two-thirds of a worker's average weekly wage to 80 percent, subject to the maximum of 53 percent of the statewide average wage for all workers. This year, the cap on weekly benefits is \$677, according to the state Department of Labor and Workforce Development, an amount that increases annually as the statewide average wage grows.

The costs of the insurance benefits, which are funded exclusively by employee contributions and are administered through the state's unemployment insurance fund, will not increase because of changes in the method of calculating the rate of contributions and by ending of diversions from the temporary disability insurance fund. Employees will not pay any more in their contribution to the Family Leave and Temporary Disability funds than when the paid leave program started in 2009. The current employee contribution of approximately 50 cents a week is limited to a maximum of \$33.50 this year.

Senate Committee on Fair School Funding Holds Hearings



The New Jersey Senate Select Committee on School Funding Fairness has held four public hearings since its establishment in January, with the goal of gathering information from residents, school administrators, students, parents, and elected officials on the subject of state school aid. Hearings were held in Newark, Cliffside Park, Edison, and Woolwich and the Committee's eight members heard testimony from hundreds of individuals on the state of funding and the challenges faced by New Jersey's nearly 600 school districts.

The committee, which is a bipartisan body comprised of 4 Democrats and 4 Republicans, is in the process of reviewing the statements and all accompanying documents before issuing its report and recommendations. Along with the results, the Committee is expected to recommend legislation that will address fair funding for all districts through the formula established in the School Funding Reform Act of 2008.