



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

## Hinchey Passes 53 of Her Senate Bills in 2024 State Legislative Session

MICHELLE HINCHEY August 20, 2024



Housing, Utility Advocacy, EMS Support, and Environmental Protection Among Hinchey's Top 2024 Legislative Priorities

**ALBANY, NY** – Senator Michelle Hinchey concluded her fourth legislative session with 53 of her bills passing the New York State Senate, 66% of which passed unanimously. 29 of Hinchey's bills passed both the Senate and Assembly and await the Governor's approval before the end of the year in order to become law. Since taking office, Hinchey has had a record of 110 bills pass through both houses of the State Legislature that address the needs of Hudson Valley communities and New Yorkers statewide.

“We’ve had a productive year passing bills that are important to our Hudson Valley communities covering local needs across housing, utility affordability, environmental protection, and EMS support — all of which are headed to the Governor’s desk and hopefully will be signed into law soon,” said **Senator Michelle Hinchey**. “Our bill to create New York’s first Short-Term Rental Registry will help communities across the state manage the housing crisis. After years of advocacy, we’re also on track to end estimated billing once and for all, bringing much-needed relief and peace of mind to ratepayers. We’ve strengthened protections for communities like ours where bomb trains and oil vessels run through our towns by requiring petroleum shippers to carry and disclose liability coverage, ensuring that corporations, not the public, bear responsibility for cleanup in case of accidents. And we’re now one step closer to ensuring EMS providers are fairly reimbursed, removing longstanding barriers to life-saving care. I’m proud that we were able to get so many critical bills passed for our communities, and will continue advocating for these priorities to be signed into law.”

### **Addressing the Rural and Upstate Housing Crisis**

Short-term rentals play an important role in New York’s tourism economy, helping homeowners generate extra income and often serving as the sole visitor lodging option in rural areas. The rapid growth of this billion-dollar industry, however, has exacerbated the housing crisis by reducing long-term housing availability, driving up costs, and displacing residents. Senator Hinchey sponsors legislation to create [New York’s first Short-Term Rental Registry](#) to help communities across New York address these challenges. The bill passed both the Senate and Assembly with bipartisan support and is endorsed by all 62 of New York’s counties, along with the NYS Association of Counties (NYSAC), the NYS Conference of Mayors (NYCOM), the Association of Towns of the State of New York, the New York State Hospitality and Tourism Association, and business councils, chambers of commerce, and housing advocates from across the State that are all advocating for it to be signed into law.

### **Strengthening Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) across New York State are struggling with funding shortfalls, insufficient reimbursement rates, and workforce challenges while demand for their services,

especially in rural and underserved areas, is rising. In response, **Senator Hinchey introduced several bills** to support EMS providers. Two bills that have passed both houses and are ready for the Governor's signature include **allowing EMS to be reimbursed for treating Medicaid patients** on the scene, transporting patients to alternative healthcare destinations, and facilitating telemedicine. A second bill would **permit ground ambulances to carry and administer blood transfusions** to trauma patients in all emergency scenarios, not just between hospitals.

### **Expanding and Preserving Access to Local Healthcare Services**

Senator Hinchey has fought to protect and expand access to local health services, including through the following bills that passed the Senate this session. One of these bills, **The Hospital Transparency Act**, is ready for the Governor's signature. If signed, it would help expose New York's healthcare deserts and require hospitals to disclose on their websites which healthcare services they choose not to provide (these are called policy-based exclusions), including reproductive and gender-affirming care. Other Hinchey bills that await the Governor's signature include legislation **requiring menstrual products to be offered for free in public college and university restrooms** and a bill to **improve care for New Yorkers with Traumatic Brain Injury**.

### **Holding Utility Companies Accountable and Protecting New Yorkers' Wallets**

Senator Hinchey has led the charge in the Senate to bring transparency and accountability to the utility industry and protect New Yorkers' wallets. Four of the Senator's utility bills passed the Senate, including legislation to **end estimated billing**, which also passed in the Assembly and is now eligible for the Governor's signature.

Several bills sponsored by Senator Hinchey passed the Senate but were not voted on by the Assembly and remain priorities for 2025. One bill would **increase fines for utility violations** and tie them to inflation for the first time since 1986, another would **prevent propane companies from charging certain hidden fees**, and the **Small Water Utility Transparency Act** aims to improve water quality from small, private companies by granting more auditing power to key agencies, including the Public Service Commission, Department of Environmental Conservation, and NYS Comptroller's Office, to ensure health and affordability standards are met.

## **Protecting the Environment**

Senator Hinchey sponsors several pieces of legislation to protect the environment and local communities. The calamitous Ohio train derailment brought into stark focus the need for more rigorous oversight of New York's freight rail systems, vessels, and storage facilities. Senator Hinchey championed legislation, passed by both legislative chambers, to **strengthen oil spill fund protections for communities and hold oil tankers and railroads accountable**. Hinchey's bill mandates increased liability coverage for vessels and major petroleum storage facilities transporting crude oil to ensure the onus is on the company for clean-up and decontamination costs and not the public. Additionally, the bill requires public disclosure of railroads' financial preparedness for such incidents.

Hinchey bills that passed the Senate but did not come before the Assembly for a vote include legislation to **ban the sale of playground materials containing harmful chemicals like PFAS, PHAS, and lead** and a bill to ensure members of **local planning and zoning boards receive annual training on environmentally conscious planning**. Both bills remain priorities for passage in the 2025 legislative session.

## **Bringing Reliable Cell Service to All New Yorkers**

Senator Hinchey is focused on closing cell coverage gaps in rural and Upstate New York, where thousands of residents face dead zones and unreliable service. Among Hinchey's priority bills is **The Cellular Mapping Act**, which directs the Public Service Commission to study and create a comprehensive map of cell phone coverage in the state to guide the expansion of statewide coverage. The Senate unanimously passed Hinchey's bill, but it was not acted on in the Assembly and must be reintroduced in the 2025 Session. Hinchey will continue to push for full legislative passage.

## **Supporting Research and Prevention on Lyme and Tick-borne Diseases**

In the Hudson Valley, Lyme and tick-borne diseases are hyperendemic, with consistently high incidence rates among the worst in the state. Senator Hinchey sponsors two bills to address this public health crisis, which passed the Senate unanimously this session; however, were not acted on in the Assembly. One bill directs the NYS Department of Health (DOH) to publish an **annual**

[Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Report](#) on its website, detailing county-level data to help raise awareness and ensure that New Yorkers and the medical community have access to current information. To support treatment efforts, the bill also directs the Superintendent of the Department of Financial Services, along with the DOH Commissioner, to review insurance coverage and costs for Lyme and other tick-borne diseases and report their findings to the legislature. Most insurance companies do not recognize chronic Lyme disease as a legitimate illness and will not cover long-term treatment, even if symptoms persist.

A second bill sponsored by Hinchey would require the [DOH's Council on Human Blood and Transfusion Services to review medical research on blood donations from individuals with Lyme and other tick-borne illnesses](#). In 2012, [the Council reported](#) on the risks of infections like babesiosis, human ehrlichiosis, and human anaplasmosis in blood transfusions, particularly those from individuals with tick-borne diseases. Given the high rates of Lyme and other tick-borne illnesses in New York, the impact on donated blood is especially concerning. The FDA and the American Red Cross, along with medical researchers and academic institutions, are studying these issues. This legislation will ensure that the Council reviews the latest research and provides updated recommendations to the Commissioner. Senator Hinchey will reintroduce both of her bills in the 2025 Session and push for their passage again in both legislative houses.

### **Delivering Support for NY Agriculture and Boosting Access to Local, Healthy Food**

As Chair of the Senate Agriculture and Food Committee, Senator Hinchey is dedicated to expanding access to healthy, locally-grown food for all New Yorkers while creating new markets to support farm businesses. One bill sponsored by Hinchey would provide public institutions, including schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and homeless shelters, the flexibility to source food from local agricultural businesses that meet [Good Food Purchasing](#) values, which can include environmental sustainability, nutrition, animal welfare, economic benefits to New York State economies, and workers' rights. Another bill would [add whole and 2% milk to the food offered through Nourish NY](#), the state's farm-to-food bank program fighting hunger in communities across the state. Both bills await the Governor's signature.

**A complete list of the 53 bills sponsored by Senator Hinchey that passed the Senate this session is**

**below.**

- [S1003A](#)-HINCHEY: Relates to providing information to patients and the public on policy-based exclusions
- [S1478](#)-HINCHEY: Directs the commissioner of health and commissioner of the office for people with developmental disabilities to conduct a study of the delivery of services to individuals with traumatic brain injury
- [S1480A](#)-HINCHEY: Establishes November twenty-sixth of each year as a day of commemoration known as Sojourner Truth Day
- [S1752](#)-HINCHEY: Expands the definition of crops, livestock and livestock products to include cannabis
- [S1851B](#)-HINCHEY: Permits the rendering of an estimated bill from a utility corporation or municipality under certain circumstances
- [S6226A](#)-HINCHEY: Provides for availability of ambulance services to store and distribute blood and initiate and administer blood transfusions
- [S6288](#)-HINCHEY: Enacts "Melanie's law"
- [S6310](#)-HINCHEY: Requires a study on the height of overhead utility lines and communication lines as such relate to the height of agricultural equipment and other heavy duty equipment
- [S6955A](#)-HINCHEY: Provides that certain purchase contracts to purchase food can be awarded to a qualified bidder who fulfills certain standards when such bid is not more than 10% higher than the lowest responsible bidder

- [S8334](#) -HINCHEY: Exempts persons holding the office of assistant district attorney in the county of Columbia from the requirement that such persons reside in such county
- [S8486C](#)-HINCHEY: Relates to medicaid reimbursement for treatment in place and transportation to alternative health care settings by ambulance services
- [S8607](#)-HINCHEY: Establishes a school speed zone camera demonstration program in the city of Kingston
- [S8690](#)-HINCHEY: Expands the definition of surplus agricultural products and processed products for the purposes of the Nourish New York program
- [S9253](#)-HINCHEY: Authorizes the county of Columbia to impose a hotel and motel tax
- [S9367](#)-HINCHEY: Extends certain provisions relating to the management of migratory game birds
- [S7296](#)-HINCHEY: Requires the council on the arts to have members from each of the ten regions of the state
- [S9248](#)-HINCHEY: Establishes the beginning farmer advisory board on agriculture
- [S9249](#)-HINCHEY: Relates to domestic animal health permits
- [S5910B](#)-HINCHEY: Requires menstrual products in public colleges and universities
- [S9263](#)-HINCHEY: Authorizes the city of Hudson to increase hotel and motel taxes
- [S8703A](#)-HINCHEY: Relates to financial liability for major facilities, vessels, and railroads
- [S8958](#)-HINCHEY: Authorizes regional planning councils' eligibility for federal and/or state grants
- [S9082](#)-HINCHEY: Extends eligibility for the farm employer overtime tax credit
- [S9264](#)-HINCHEY: Establishes an occupancy tax in the village of Catskill
- [S9271](#)-HINCHEY: Establishes an occupancy tax in the village of Coxsackie

- [S885C](#)-HINCHEY: Regulates short-term residential rentals
- [S9265](#)-HINCHEY: Waives the residency requirement for certain county attorney positions within Greene county
- [S8947](#)-HINCHEY: Authorizes the town of Kinderhook to alienate and discontinue the use of certain parklands
- [S9679](#)-HINCHEY: Authorizes the cannabis control board to issue a cannabis event permit to certain licensees authorized to conduct retail sales of adult-use cannabis and cannabis products
  
- [S1055](#)-HINCHEY: Establishes the New York State youth in agriculture and entrepreneurship summer employment program
- [S1056A](#)-HINCHEY: Relates to land used in agricultural production
- [S1290](#)-HINCHEY: Relates to a state flag for raising awareness of veteran suicide
- [S1413](#)-HINCHEY: Establishes the position of Catskill park coordinator within the department of environmental conservation
- [S1687A](#)-HINCHEY: Provides a rebuttable presumption relating to certification as a minority and women-owned business enterprise
- [S1791](#)-HINCHEY: Requires the public service commission and the department of environmental conservation to conduct audits of private water companies
- [S2236](#)-HINCHEY: Establishes a one-stop farming hotline with the Cornell cooperative extension



- [S3125A](#)-HINCHEY: Establishes procurement goals for New York state food products purchased by state agencies
- [S3582](#)-HINCHEY: Relates to the treatment of excess credits for the rehabilitation of historic barns
- [S5060](#)-HINCHEY: Establishes that the council on human blood and transfusion services shall review all current medical research and guidance regarding the donation of blood by patients with a history of Lyme or tick-borne illnesses
- [S6318-A](#)-HINCHEY: Directs the public service commission to review cellular service within the state
- [S6365](#)-HINCHEY: Relates to the inspection of certain vacated property for abandoned animals
- [S6923](#)-HINCHEY: Requires railroad corporations to conduct a comprehensive safety inspection when a freight train is parked in a train yard prior to traveling on tracks within the state
- [S8931](#)-HINCHEY: Requires certain municipal planning boards and zoning boards of appeals to receive environmentally conscious planning training
- [S7294](#)-HINCHEY: Enacts the "utility penalty adjustment"; adjusts utility penalties to account for inflation; increases such penalties and ties them to inflation after January 1, 2025.
- [S7600](#)-HINCHEY: Requires the department of health to publish a report on the incidence of tick-borne illnesses annually on the department's website
- [S7769A](#)-HINCHEY: Requires medical records to be made available to patients in an electronic format through a web portal

- [S8932A](#)-HINCHEY: Prohibits the sale of playground surfacing materials that contain PFAS, PAHs or more than ninety parts per million of lead; and provides penalties for violations
- [S8933A](#)-HINCHEY: Relates to notice of adult care facility closure requirements
- [S9002](#)-HINCHEY: Defines therapeutic agriculture for the purposes of community gardens
- [S7874](#)-HINCHEY: Establishes a state frontotemporal degeneration registry
- [S9795](#)-HINCHEY: Relates to use of voting systems by municipalities
- [S8606A](#)-HINCHEY: Prohibits the misrepresentation or collection of certain fees related to the delivery, usage, and storage of liquified petroleum
- [S9050](#)-HINCHEY: Extends eligibility for real property tax exemptions to veterans who served on a submarine or on classified missions during a period of war