



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Venditto

## Important New Laws Taking Effect in January 2016

MICHAEL VENDITTO December 29, 2015

| ISSUE: **VETERANS, WOMEN'S EQUALITY AGENDA, WOMEN'S HEALTH, SMALL BUSINESS**



Senator Michael Venditto (R-C-I, Massapequa) says with the arrival of the New Year, a number of new laws will be taking effect in New York State, starting January 1, 2016. A summary of the new laws include:

**Women's Equality Agenda:** seven of the eight bills encompassing the Women's Equality Agenda will take effect on January 16, 2016, including Preventing Human Trafficking and Protecting Trafficked Victims (Chapter 368), Ensuring Equal Pay (Chapter 362), Stopping Discrimination Based on Family Status (Chapter 365), Ending Pregnancy Discrimination in

the Workplace (Chapter 369), Preventing Housing Discrimination Against Domestic Violence Victims (Chapter 366), Prohibiting Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Chapter 363) and Removing Barriers to Remedying Discrimination (Chapter 364). The purpose of these laws is to improve the rights of women and protect those who are most vulnerable to abuse and discrimination.

The final law will take effect on April 1, 2016 and this measure creates a pilot program that would enable domestic violence victims to seek temporary orders of protection through electronic means rather than having to appear in person (Chapter 367).

**Business Tax Cuts:** starting on Jan. 1, 2016, the Business Income Tax Rate will be lowered from 7.1 to 6.5 percent, saving businesses a total \$125 million.

**Increases in the Minimum Wage and Minimum Wage Reimbursement Tax Credit:** On Dec. 31, 2015, the state's minimum wage will increase from \$8.75 an hour to \$9 an hour. The increase goes hand in hand with an increase in the Minimum Wage Reimbursement Tax Credit from \$1.31 to \$1.35 to help offset some of the increased wage costs for businesses.

**Help for Veterans:** a new law taking effect Jan. 2, 2016, will help reduce the local property tax burden for veterans by authorizing an increase in limits to the real property tax exemption (Chapter 381).

**Access to Missing Child Case Information:** on Jan. 19, 2016, a new law specifies that Child Protective Services records can be released to expedite an investigation when law enforcement is investigating a missing child and there is reason to believe that a parent, guardian, or other person legally responsible for the child is the subject of a report of child abuse or maltreatment (Chapter 439).

**Breastfeeding Mothers' Bill of Rights:** a new law will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2016, that will update the Breastfeeding Mothers' Bill of Rights to add a provision that allows women to take reasonable, unpaid breaks at work in order to pump breast milk for up to three years following childbirth (Chapter 446).

**Expanding Access to Telehealth Services:** three new laws that take effect Jan. 1, 2016, will greatly expand telehealth services across the state. Access to health care is expanded by providing for the delivery of health care services via telehealth under Medicaid coverage and private insurance parity (Chapter 6) and two other laws include dentists and physical and occupational therapists within the covered telehealth services under Medicaid would then be able to provide services from a distant location to benefit the patient where and when they need it most (Chapter 167, 454).