



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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New Laws Bring Change in 2017

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With the arrival of a New Year comes change—and that includes change for New York State too, as in 2017, a number of measures aimed at making life better for people in the Empire State go into effect. Here's a quick look at some of the new laws:

Help with paying for higher education: New Yorkers will have expanded options for investing in higher education under a new law that authorizes taxpayers to make direct deposit contributions of personal income tax refunds into a New York State 529 College Savings

Program.

Continued incentives for hiring heroes: The “Hire-A-Vet Tax Credit,” which I was proud to support and discussed in a recent column, grants a two year extension allowing tax credits for businesses that hire a veteran returning home from military service on a full time basis. Businesses may earn up to \$5,000 for hiring a qualified veteran and up to \$15,000 if the veteran is also disabled.

Protecting those who protect us: New York’s “Move Over Law”—which requires motorists to move over when passing authorized emergency vehicles pulled over on the side of the road—was created to save lives and prevent injuries. On January 17th, a bill I supported to expand this important protection will go into effect and will require that drivers move over for any vehicle displaying a blue or green light, such as those being operated by volunteer firefighters or volunteer ambulance operators.

Increased opportunities for giving the gift of life: With the New Year comes additional opportunities for enrolling as an organ and tissue donor in the New York State Donate Life Registry. Under a new law, New Yorkers applying for health insurance offered through the New York State of Health Insurance Exchange will be able to sign up to be part of the Donate Life Registry.

Help for those battling heroin: While most provisions of legislation passed to address heroin and opioid abuse took effect when signed into law earlier this year, some elements—including those that expand access to treatment and make it easier for those seeking help to get it—go into effect at the start of the New Year.

As 2017 continues, I would like to wish you the best for a New Year that's healthy, happy and full of new opportunities for you and your family. With a new legislative session now underway, I look forward to meeting the challenges ahead and continuing to work with my colleagues to make not only our region, but all of New York State, a better place to live and work. If you have a suggestion to help us achieve this goal, I invite you to share it by emailing me at ritchie@nysenate.gov or calling my office at (315) 782-3418.