



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Legislative Session Summary 2018

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL July 3, 2018



The full report can be accessed by clicking attachment above.

The 2018 legislative session will be remembered for a litany of legislative and policy successes accomplished by members of the Senate Democratic Conference. While the total number of bills passed in the Senate declined this year, Senate Democratic Conference members saw a conference-wide uptick in legislation and consequently gained new opportunities to achieve long-held legislative goals.

Most importantly, many of the bills passed by Conference members will positively impact the lives of constituents and New Yorkers around the state. Some of the most noteworthy measures include:

Prohibiting smoking within 100 feet of public libraries;

Expanding the plain language requirement for consumer contracts from contracts worth up to \$50,000 to contracts worth up to \$100,000;

Promoting clear information for families of residents of nursing homes by requiring notice when a Temporary Operator is installed to manage a nursing home or assisted living facility;

Studying wage disparities on the basis of race and sex within the public sector; Supporting small businesses and worker cooperatives through grant funding, microlending, and further state support;

Establishing tax credits to support disabled individuals through retrofitting nonaccessible buildings and incentivizing the hiring of disabled individuals by small businesses;

Creating a hotline to report the location of potholes to ensure repair work is directed to the right places; Promoting career and technical education through data driven analysis;

Eliminating the overtime cap for New York City Transit Authority employees;

Studying the use of a New York City seawall to protect the City from rising sea levels;

Requiring disclosure of water usage in plain english to various communities in Long Island and Westchester County; Providing free feminine hygiene products to inmates in correctional facilities; and

Promoting the construction of a new Hudson River Tunnel crossing by securing a permanent easement in the future transit corridor. With broad agreement on strongly supported goals, the Senate Democratic Conference used an aggressive strategy of hostile amendments designed to bring issues of critical importance into focus within the Senate Chamber. Senators debated and voted on critical priorities through Democratic-sponsored amendments such as:

Supporting the reproductive health and contraceptive coverage;

Enacting the Child Victims Act;

Supporting the DREAM Act;

Protecting New Yorkers from gun violence;

Enacting comprehensive voting rights and campaign finance reform;

Uncoupling teacher evaluations from standardized test results.

The votes and advocacy of Senate Democratic Conference members can also be credited for ensuring core progressive accomplishments in this year's Enacted Budget. This year's Enacted Budget saw the enactment or creation of:

- The first phase of an MTA Rescue Plan that includes a 3 surcharge on for-hire vehicle rides;
- Additional state support for the New York City Housing Authority and enactment of Design-Build authority to speed further repairs;
- Comprehensive sexual harassment legislation including new rights for independent contractors and a requirement that all employers enact internal anti-harassment policies;

- Support for public-sector unions in response to the Janus case;
- Extension of the time required to save rape kits from 30 days to 20 years;
- A public option pension plan that allows private sector employees to opt into a retirement savings account managed by the state;
- And a plan to combat the Trump Tax cuts through tax workarounds that restore lost tax benefits taken away from New Yorkers by the federal government.

While many critical issues were left unaddressed, the Senate Democratic Conference increasingly drove the business of the chamber and secured victories on many core legislative priorities. This year's session was a clear and emphatic step towards a Democratic Majority and the accomplishment of long-held Democratic policy goals. In a complex political environment produced by this year's events, the Senate Democratic Conference's members seized a new opportunity to ensure New Yorkers voices were heard and real-world problems were addressed in thoughtful and productive ways.