



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

State Senate Passes Bills Co-sponsored by Metzger to Protect Public Health, Privacy in Contact Tracing, Election Outcomes, the Environment, and More

JEN METZGER July 31, 2020

| ISSUE: **INSULIN ACCESS, COVID-19; ABSENTEE VOTING, OUTDOOR RECREATION**



Hudson Valley and Catskills, NY...The State Senate passed nearly 400 bills last week, including many legislative initiatives sponsored and co-sponsored by Senator Metzger (SD-42) that will benefit the Hudson Valley and Catskills communities she represents. In addition to passing bills she introduced to **close the rural broadband gap**, increase the resiliency of the state's **food supply system**, and **prevent toxic industrial chemicals from contaminating our water**,

the Senate also took action on bills she co-sponsored to protect public health, privacy in contact tracing, election outcomes, and the environment, and to expand employment in healthcare, among other initiatives.

“We passed a number of important bills to help Hudson Valley and Catskills residents, from reducing out-of-pocket costs for life-saving medications to protecting the confidentiality of information obtained for contact tracing, which is vital to keeping New York's COVID transmission rates low,” **said Senator Metzger**. “We were able to address a number of needs and challenges facing our communities during this difficult time as we navigate this crisis together.”

Below are highlights of legislation that Metzger co-sponsored.

Increasing Affordable Access to Insulin

[S8255](#) reduces the cap on cost sharing for insulin to \$30 per month, helping to ensure affordable access for New Yorkers with diabetes who depend on insulin for their survival.

Supporting our Home Care Workers & Most Vulnerable Residents

It's critical that New York's frontline care workers have the resources they need to best protect and care for the vulnerable populations they serve, as well as for themselves. [S8361](#) would require that Managed Long Term Care plans (MLTCs) reimburse providers of home care and personal assistant services for personal protective equipment (PPE).

Ensuring that New Yorkers Can Vote Safely in November

Several bills were passed to help ensure that New Yorkers can vote safely in November with the confidence that their absentee ballots will be counted. [S8783A](#) would temporarily allow the processing of absentee ballot applications prior to 30 days before the election. [S8370B](#) would give voters notice of any deficiencies in their absentee ballot envelopes and an

opportunity to fix them. [S8799A](#) would temporarily provide that any absentee ballot be presumed timely even if it does not bear a dated postmark, as long as the ballot was received and time-stamped by the day after Election Day.

Guaranteeing Privacy in the Contact Tracing Process

Contact tracing is absolutely essential for fighting the coronavirus, and two bills passed in the State Senate to ensure that any personal information collected during this process will be protected. [S8450C](#) requires contact tracing information to be kept confidential and used solely for the specific purpose of preventing transmission of COVID-19 while [S8448D](#) imposes requirements for the use of electronically collected emergency health data during the COVID-19 emergency. The legislation requires that this information be expunged or de-identified within a certain time period.

Creating Career Pathways in Health Care

New York needs more healthcare workers, especially in rural communities, and [S8278A](#), which passed the Senate, requires the NYS Departments of Health, Labor, and Education to establish a program that trains unemployed and underemployed individuals to enter our healthcare workforce.

Identifying Recreational Opportunities within our State Park System for Active Seniors

New York is blessed with an extraordinary park system, and it's important to make sure that all can enjoy it to the fullest, including our seniors. The Senate passed [S7765](#), directing the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation to post on its website an easily accessible senior trail guide, identifying walking and hiking opportunities in the state park system.

Prohibiting the Sale and Display of Hate Symbols

The Senate took an important step forward with the passage of [S8298B](#) to prohibit the sale and display of hate symbols on the grounds of public property, including fairgrounds, unless serving an educational purpose. The bill makes clear that known symbols of hate, including the Confederate flag, are prohibited from being sold or displayed at county and state fairs.

Closing the Fracking Waste Loophole

Fracking waste is hazardous waste, yet because of a loophole to the fossil fuel industry in federal law, this waste can be exported to New York from states like Pennsylvania and can be dumped, untreated, into landfills and municipal sewer systems. [S3392](#) will regulate fracking waste as hazardous waste.

Jen Metzger represents the 42nd Senate District, which includes all of Sullivan County and parts of Delaware, Orange, and Ulster Counties. Senator Metzger serves as Chair of the Agriculture Committee and sits on the Environmental Conservation, Education, Health, Energy and Telecommunications, Local Government, Women's Issues, Domestic Animal Welfare, and Legislative Commission on Rural Resources Committees.

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