



Gerard Bringmann
Legislative Activities
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On the federal level, there has been a great deal of controversy regarding President Trump's nominee for Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos. In fact, we already have at least three School District's here in Suffolk County (Patchogue-Medford, Comeswogue & Sachem) that have passed resolutions requesting that she not receive Senate confirmation. Confirmation hearings are currently taking place and the testimony in these hearings to date has been discouraging. On the State Level, Governor Cuomo has put severely proposals in front of the legislature which is now back in session:

- One billion dollars in additional State Aid (4% increase) – even with the tax cap rising this year to 1.26% from last year's 0.12%, these funds will barely be able to maintain our current levels of programs and staffing. Long Island is only slated to get \$ 75.3 million of the additional billion, which represents a 2.8% increase in aid for Nassau/Suffolk Schools.
- "Raise the Age Act" – the Governor has proposed to raise the age so that criminals under the age of 18yrs old can no longer be charged as adults and tried in Criminal Court, no matter how heinous the crime. This appears to be receiving opposition from many legislators, such as Assemblyman Dean Murray, who refers to this as the "Gang Recruitment Act".
- The "Excelsior Scholarship Program" – This program would be phased in over two years and make any child who's family makes less than \$100,000 this fall, \$110,000 in 2018 & \$125,000 per year in 2019, eligible for free college tuition, if they went to Community College or a SUNY College/University. Room, Board & student fees would not be covered.
- Dream Act – This would allow children of illegal immigrants to participate in the State's College Aid Program.
- Needless to say, all of the aforementioned proposals need to be vetted & approved by our State Legislators before going back to the Governor.

Former State Senator Michael Venditto, part of who's district was in Suffolk County, lost his re-election bid by a narrow margin to John Brooks after a recount, which technically gives the Democratic Party a numerical majority in the State Senate 32 to 31. However, with the now seven Senators who make up the Independent Democratic Conference continuing to align themselves with the Republicans, John Flanagan (R – East Northport) will remain as the Senate Majority Leader, which is a major plus for our region.

Legislation which is gradually moving the minimum wage here in New York up to \$15 kicked in on Jan 1st, with the minimum now set @ \$10.00 per hour. Fortunately, this only has a minimal effect on our school districts but may have a greater impact within the next few years.

As many of our School Districts have Legislative Committees, I'd like to request that our PTA Council Presidents check in with their Superintendent's and report back on what these committees feel are the most important legislative issues that they feel need to be addressed. It's important to know what our districts view as the top priorities.