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### Legislative Advocacy Report – April 20, 2020

There is not too much to report this month legislatively, due to the Coronavirus Situation, which has severely limited governmental meetings. However, there are still a few updates & developments of interest to report on the New York State level (all as part of the State Budget which was adapted earlier this month):

- **Banning the Sale of Flavored Vaping Products** – this is included as part of the budget and was one of the NYS-PTA’s objectives for this year. Also, as part of this section of the budget, there are now increased penalties for anyone caught selling tobacco products to minors.
- **Bail Reform Law** – as anticipated, there were some changes made to last year’s Bail Reform Law adding several offenses that can be bail eligible including Child Pornography Offenses. However, there are still a few crimes that relate to children and/or schools that were NOT restored to bail eligibility, the most serious of which was “Criminal Possession of a Gun on School Grounds”. In that regard, I have approached Kyle Belokopitsky (Executive Director of NYS-PTA) about the best way to proceed in this matter. Unfortunately, it doesn’t look like anything can be done this year, as the Legislative Session appears to be effectively over.
- **Legalization of Recreational Marijuana** – this is something that was strongly opposed by NYS- PTA and fortunately was NOT included as part of this year’s budget. Unfortunately, this issue has not been totally put to rest, as it will undoubtedly be brought up again next year. Especially due to New York State’s financial condition.
- **Mental Health** – the budget provides \$10 million dollars (total, Statewide) in funding for grants to school districts to address student mental health issues.
- **School Aid**- surprisingly, the school aid budget runs showed a slight increase of \$95 million dollars (statewide), which is as well as we could expect considering the State’s desperate financial situation due to shutdowns in the economy caused by the Corona Virus Situation. However, we need to be aware of a proviso in the budget that allows quarterly adjustments to aid should Federal dollars not come in as anticipated or should the economic recovery take longer than expected. *Mid-Year cuts in school aid are a very real possibility for the 2020-21 School Year.*
- **Current School Year** – as we all know by now, School Board Elections & Budget votes have been postponed until June and the 180-day school year requirement has been waived by Executive Order. Schools are currently ordered closed through May 15<sup>th</sup> and

there's a possibility that closures may be extended another couple of weeks. Some other States (Virginia, Florida, etc.) have already cancelled the balance of their school years.

As always, should anyone wish to get in contact with me regarding any Federal, State or County legislative issues, please know the best way to get in touch is via email. My email address is **gerardbringmann@gmail.com**

Respectfully submitted ... Gerry Bringmann

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