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Senator Todd Kaminsky, his wife, Ellen and their son, Rafe.

News Reports Concerning **State Senator Todd Kaminsky's** Vigorous Representation of our Residents.

The following are just a small number of the news reports. Click on the link and it will bring you to the article.

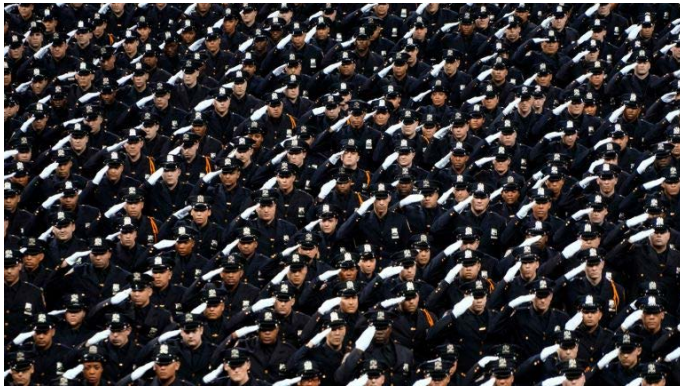
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Visit Senator Todd Kaminsky's [Re-Election website](#); [His Official Senate Website](#) and [His Listing in Wikipedia](#)

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[newsday.com](http://newsday.com)

## Law extends health benefits to ex-NYPD officers with 9/11 maladies



Cadets salute during the NYPD Police Academy graduation ceremony at Madison Square Garden in Manhattan on April 1, 2016. Photo Credit: Craig Ruttle

Updated September 11, 2017 3:40 PM

By Michael Gormley

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ALBANY — A new law signed Monday will provide for unlimited line-of-duty sick leave benefits to former New York City police officers who became ill after responding to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and now work for other police agencies.

The law closes a gap in which former NYPD officers were facing an end to their allowance of sick days under their new employers on Long Island and elsewhere. It applies to officers who are verified to have worked on the rescue, recovery and cleanup of the terror attacks and are suffering from cancer and other maladies from that service.

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“It is critical that we honor these courageous efforts and by signing this bill into law today, we make it clear that New York stands behind the first responders in their time of need, just as they stood with New York on that tragic day 16 years ago,” Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo said as he signed the bill into law. “Our message is simple: We will always have your back.”

Former NYPD officers now working in other departments, including on Long Island, lobbied the State Legislature to pass the bill even as they fought through the pain of their cancer and other illnesses. The situation had become dire for some officers who had exhausted their sick days under their new employers and new benefit packages while receiving treatment, advocates said. Many have had to rely on donated sick days from colleagues.

Sen. Martin Golden (R-Brooklyn), a former police officer and the law’s sponsor, said the measure will help thousands of men and women.

“The first responders who led recovery efforts on that day, and the weeks and months that followed, deserve the very best health care and assistance New York has to offer,” he said Monday.

Sen. Todd Kaminsky (D-Long Beach), who worked with the police officers in a [blitz of lobbying](#) late in June as the legislative session was coming to a close, called the new law “a bright ray of hope in an otherwise very somber and difficult day.”

“To have heroes of 9/11 faced with greater financial difficulty was very hard to watch,” Kaminsky said.

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[newsday.com](http://newsday.com)

## **Nassau DA Madeline Singas and Sen. Todd Kaminsky push anti-corruption bills**



Nassau District Attorney Madeline Singas and State Sen. Todd Kaminsky (D-Long Beach) announce an anticorruption legislative package in Mineola on Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2017. Photo Credit: Howard Schnapp

**By Paul LaRocco** [paul.larocco@newsday.com](mailto:paul.larocco@newsday.com) [@paullarocco](#) Updated February 8, 2017 5:11 PM

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Two Democrats are calling for changes to state law that would increase penalties for public corruption convictions and give local prosecutors some of the same tools as the federal government in investigating cases.

Nassau District Attorney Madeline Singas and State Sen. Todd Kaminsky, of Long Beach, on Wednesday announced the proposals in response to what they said were the most-common roadblocks met during local corruption probes — ones that often result in charges not being filed, or filed instead by the U.S. attorney’s office.

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Senate bills introduced by Kaminsky — and backed by Singas — would make official misconduct a felony rather than a misdemeanor, and would criminalize lying to a prosecutor or investigator from a district attorney’s office, much like lying to a federal agent.

“Our federal partners end up bringing most of the public corruption cases because they have better tools,” Singas said at a news conference at the district attorney’s office in Mineola. “It’s a felony to lie to a federal prosecutor. It’s not even a crime to lie to us.”

Kaminsky, a former prosecutor with the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, said the federal statute covering lying to a federal agent was a key method used to break open investigations.

“When you tell someone at their door that they have to tell you the truth, they often do — and that leads to great cases happening,” Kaminsky said.

Just within the past two years, federal prosecutors have brought corruption cases against former Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, a Democrat; former State Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos, a Rockville Centre Republican; and Nassau County Executive Edward Mangano and former Oyster Bay Town Supervisor John Venditto, both Republicans.

In the Mangano case, his wife, Linda, also faces charges of lying to a federal investigator. The couple has pleaded not guilty.

The Nassau and Suffolk district attorneys offices, on the other hand, have not brought corruption cases against any top elected officials during that time.

The proposed strengthening of the official misconduct statute would increase maximum sentences from one year to anywhere between 1 1/4 years and 15 years, depending on the class of felony.

“At this point, if you are a politician looking to do wrong, it’s sad to say, but you probably don’t really fear the DA’s offices right now,” Kaminsky said. “The penalties don’t mean very much and the tools aren’t there to catch you.”

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Kaminsky said he hoped his bills would be considered this year along with other ethics reform proposals. A spokesman for the Senate GOP majority did not respond to a request for comment Wednesday.

Good government advocates backed the measures.

“Local district attorneys know the public officials the best and can provide a more watchful eye than others,” said Dick Dadey, executive director of Citizens Union, a Manhattan-based nonprofit.



Paul LaRocco has written about Nassau County government and politics since 2014. Since starting at Newsday in late 2010, he has also covered Suffolk County and the Town of Oyster Bay.

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## State senator wants bill against arming teachers

The bill would ban any staff to carry guns except for school resource officers, law enforcement or security guards.

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1.

Proposal to ban teachers from carrying guns in schools



2.

State Sen. Todd Kaminsky (D-Long Beach) plans to introduce a bill that would ban teachers from carrying guns in schools. (Credit: Newsday / John Asbury)

By John Asbury [john.asbury@newsday.com](mailto:john.asbury@newsday.com) [@JohnAsbury](https://www.facebook.com/JohnAsbury) Updated March 3, 2018 7:00 PM

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State Sen. Todd Kaminsky plans to introduce a bill that would ban teachers from carrying guns in schools.

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The proposal follows President Donald Trump’s call to arm teachers in the wake of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting that killed 17 people in Parkland, Florida, last month.

Kaminsky (D-Long Beach) co-sponsored the bill with state Sen. John Brooks (D-Seaford), which would ban any staff to carry guns except for school resource officers, law enforcement or security guards. He plans to introduce the proposal to the State Senate on Monday.

Kaminsky and Brooks appeared with other Democratic Senate leaders Saturday afternoon in Rockville Centre at South Side High School to unveil the proposed legislation with school officials, students and the advocacy group Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.

Kaminsky said the law is needed as a safeguard for school districts if current laws are changed, such as the president’s promise to eliminate federal gun-free zones. State law makes it a felony to possess any gun on school grounds.

“If we decide to arm teachers, we are implicitly saying there is nothing that can be done,” Kaminsky said. “It is a cop-out. It’s saying we know that someone who shouldn’t will get their hands on a very dangerous weapon and come into our schools. More guns are not and never will be the answer.”

New York Republicans said state officials have not proposed arming teachers accused Kaminsky of grandstanding and urged him to work on a school safety package with the Assembly.

“No one in New York is proposing to arm schoolteachers, and he knows it. In fact, Senator (John) Flanagan is adamantly opposed, and thinks teachers should be allowed to focus on teaching,” Senate GOP spokesman Scott Reif said.

New York State Republicans have defeated several gun control measures proposed by Democrats.

A party-line vote last week by the Republican-controlled Senate defeated measures to ban bump stocks, which convert guns into automatic weapons, would have increased background checks and would have created an institute to study gun violence.



Republican senators promised to earmark money for placing more armed guards in any school district that wants them, hardening school doors and security cameras.

On Long Island, Miller Place schools last week hired four ex-NYPD officers as armed guards. Center Moriches school officials also proposed hiring two armed guards, and Mount Sinai officials are reviewing a similar proposal.

Rockville Centre Superintendent William Johnson said Saturday the state should take any steps to eliminate all guns in schools to protect students.

“You don’t solve problems with problems,” Johnson said. “Guns don’t belong in schools. Books and supplies belong in schools. We don’t need the guns.”

*With James T. Madore*

John Asbury covers the Town of Hempstead and the City of Long Beach. He has been with Newsday since 2014 and previously covered crime for nine years for The Press-Enterprise in Riverside, Calif.

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[newsday.com](http://newsday.com)

## **Baldwin to receive \$1M in state funding to revitalize downtown**

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**By Stefanie Dazio** [stefanie.dazio@newsday.com](mailto:stefanie.dazio@newsday.com) [@StefanieDazio](https://twitter.com/StefanieDazio) Updated March 26, 2018 3:52 PM

The money will go toward knocking down 12 buildings on Grand Avenue, and then developing retail and office space and apartments.

State, county and town officials announced Monday a \$1 million state grant to revitalize downtown Baldwin.



State Sen. Todd Kaminsky (D-Long Beach) and Hempstead Town Supervisor Laura Gillen announce on March 26, 2018, a \$1 million state grant to revitalize downtown Baldwin. (Credit: Newsday / Stefanie Dazio)

The money is part of \$2.8 million in total being awarded as part of the state’s most recent round of municipal revitalization efforts through the Restore New York Communities Initiative, according to a news release from Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo’s office. Southampton also received \$1 million and New York City got \$857,874.

“Downtown communities are vital to keeping our economies thriving and to attracting businesses and families to put down their roots in New York,” Cuomo said in the release.

State Sen. Todd Kaminsky (D-Long Beach), Nassau County Executive Laura Curran, Town of Hempstead Supervisor Laura Gillen and Senior Councilwoman Dorothy Goosby made the Baldwin announcement on Grand Avenue alongside several residents in front of a vacant lot alongside a dilapidated building. Curran currently lives in Baldwin, and Gillen grew up there.

The redevelopment is aimed at updating the hamlet’s blighted downtown after more than 15 years of efforts to do so by local elected officials and residents. The grant will go toward the demolition of 12 buildings on Grand Avenue and, subsequently, the construction of a mixed-use development on the land.

“This funding will assist in revitalizing Baldwin’s downtown in an effort to attract new residents, visitors and businesses, and bring in much needed economic activity,” Kaminsky wrote in a December letter to the commissioner of Empire State Development, the agency implementing the grant.

Last year, the Hempstead Town Board voted to award a contract for the downtown’s redevelopment to master planners Woodmere-based Basser-Kaufman and Garden City-based Engel Burman Group.

The developers are in negotiations with property owners on Grand Avenue to acquire the current buildings and land but eminent domain could be used, Gillen said.

There will be retail on the ground floor of the development, office and medical space on the second floor and housing on the third and fourth floors, officials said.

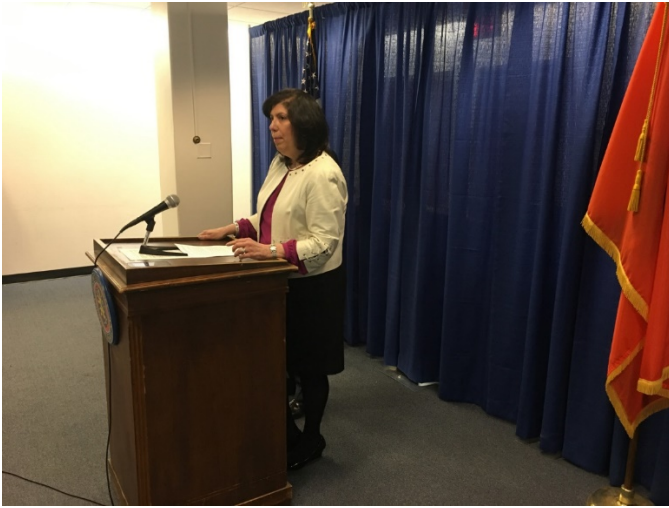
“Revitalizing these commercial and residential properties in this area is critical to attracting millennials to stay here,” Gillen said. “There’s no reason why this can’t be a thriving, thriving downtown in our transit-oriented development.”



[liherald.com](http://liherald.com)

## **Kaminsky bill cracks down on violent threats | Herald Community Newspapers**

Posted May 4, 2018



District Attorney Madeline Singas announced a proposed bill that would criminalize threats of mass harm.

Courtesy Miriam Sholder



This bill will allow law enforcement to arrest those who make threats of mass harm.”

State Senator Todd Kaminsky

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State Sen. Todd Kaminsky announced on Monday that he would introduce a bill in the Senate that would criminalize threats of mass violence against schools, houses of worship and other public institutions.

Drafted by Nassau County District Attorney Madeline Singas’s office, the bill would create two new crimes: “making a threat of mass harm” and “aggravated threat of mass harm.”

Singas said that the proposed legislation would close a loophole in current state law and toughen penalties in order to “hold those who make threats accountable for their words.”

The proposed bill comes in the wake of some of the nation’s deadliest mass shootings, including one at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., on Feb. 14, in which 17 students and teachers were killed.



In March, about 500 people gathered in Kennedy Plaza to protest gun violence in tandem with the March for Our Lives rally in Washington, D.C., and in solidarity with students around the country who pushed for stricter gun-control legislation.

“School threats have skyrocketed since the Parkland tragedy, causing lockdowns, panic, and have diverted law enforcement resources from their lifesaving work,” Singas said. “We need stronger laws that criminalize phony threats and protect our communities from the horrific violence that has stolen so many lives.”

The bill aims to be proactive in potential emergency situations that could occur in public places. “Any increase in the tools we can use to deter or prevent these types of threats against schools or houses of worship is a good thing for our society,” said Rabbi Jack Zanerhaft of Temple Emanu-El in Long Beach. “Even if it prevents one such threat, we would all benefit.”

The bill — which will also be introduced in the Assembly by Assemblywoman Christine Pellegrino — would remedy a deficiency Singas said was highlighted by a 2017 decision in the State Supreme Court Appellate Division’s Second Department, which found that a school employee’s alleged statement to a faculty member that she “better be absent the day they fire me, because I’m going to come in here and Columbine this [expletive],” was not enough to justify a charge of “making a terroristic threat.”

The charges in the case were dismissed, and the defendant later requested the return of his guns that had been seized by the police, including an AR-15-style semi-automatic rifle, an FN Herstal PS-90 semi-automatic rifle and a Mossberg 500A shotgun.

“The fact that someone in our state could say that he is going to ‘Columbine’ a school and yet police are nearly powerless to take action shows that our laws need strengthening,” Kaminsky said. “This bill will allow law enforcement to arrest those who make threats of mass harm, and, importantly, provides them a basis to seize weapons from perpetrators of these threats.”

Singas said that in the Second Department case, *People v. Hulsen*, the court noted that the crime of “making a terroristic threat” was enacted after the Sept. 11 attacks, and found that evidence was insufficient to show Brian Hulsen’s “intent to intimidate . . . a civilian population.”

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“As a mother and a former teacher, a school shooting is my worst nightmare,” Pellegrino said. “The number of threats against our schools has dramatically increased, and we’re here to say enough is enough. Threats against the lives of students and faculty cause fear and panic throughout the community. They are not to be joked about or taken lightly. This bill will fix a glaring flaw in the current state law and ensure anyone who threatens our schools is held accountable for their actions.”

Under the legislation, anyone convicted of making a threat of mass harm would face up to a year in jail, according to the D.A.’s office. Defendants convicted of aggravated threat of mass harm — an elevated charge for those who prepare to follow through on their threats by making plans, compiling target lists or possessing weapons or devices — would face up to four years in prison.

If the bill is passed by both houses of the State Legislature and signed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, it would take effect immediately.

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[fox5ny.com](http://fox5ny.com)

## Lawmaker demands LIRR do better

FOX

By: [JODI GOLDBERG](#)

**Posted:** Jan 03 2018 08:13PM EST\

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**NEW YORK (FOX5NY.COM)** - It may be a new year but it is the same old story of service disruptions and delays when it comes to the Long Island Rail Road.

Dozens of disruptions in December prompted state Sen. Todd Kaminsky to demand an investigation. A damaged rail in Amtrak's East River tunnel Wednesday morning caused changes and cancellations for commuters who crowded outside of Jamaica Station.

"We have to upgrade our signals and our tracks but having a real plan for the East River Tunnel is critical," Kaminsky said. "I'm not an alarmist, I don't like raising

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alarm where it's not necessary, but I believe we're playing with danger when we're not going to repair these tunnels for six, seven years."

A spokesperson said the LIRR is committed to operating the safest, most efficient railroad in the country.



"This season was more difficult than usual because the leaves dropped in a very short time frame at the end of November and December," the spokesperson said in a statement.

Riders aren't buying it. One commuter told Fox 5 he believes the MTA puts money toward salaries and not infrastructure.

"I understand it's cold out but it's cold in New York," Kaminsky said. "A lot of other countries are a lot colder that have a good rail system.

LIRR crews were preparing the trains, tracks, and rails for Thursday's snow, the MTA said. Depending on how much snow falls, service may be modified or suspended.

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## LI lawmakers push for Sandy mortgage aid program extension

Phyllis Boland said Thursday, May 3, 2018, that state funding, which helps pay the mortgage on her East Rockaway home that was severely damaged by superstorm Sandy, has been cut. (Credit: Newsday / Rachel Brightman)

By **Zachary R. Dowdy** [zachary.dowdy@newsday.com](mailto:zachary.dowdy@newsday.com) Updated May 20, 2018 8:55 PM

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Two Long Island lawmakers are asking state officials to push for the revival of an extension of a mortgage assistance program for superstorm Sandy victims, saying the end of the aid has left their constituents in a financial bind.

A 16-month extension of the Interim Mortgage Assistance program expired in December 2017, preventing participants from receiving aid beyond the 20 months originally allotted to the program. The program is funded by the federal government but is administered by the state through NY Rising, the agency handling several aid relief measures for Sandy victims. It gives residents who have had to relocate up to \$3,000 a month as they pay rent and a mortgage while their homes are being repaired.

Rep. Kathleen Rice (D-Garden City) and State Sen. Todd Kaminsky (D-Long Beach) have asked the state to request that the federal government reverse its decision to suspend the IMA funding extension. In December, 50 people were cut off from the extended funding, but that number could grow as other residents reach the end of their first 20 months with the aid program.

“This sudden change has caused undue financial hardship for our constituents who based their construction timeline on the 36-month IMA aid they were originally granted,” read a March 28 letter by Rice and Kaminsky to the Governor’s Office for Storm Recovery, which oversees NY Rising and created the mortgage assistance program.

In December, the two lawmakers asked the federal government to lift the deadline and reinstate the extension program, but the federal Department of Housing and



Urban Development, which funds state-administered disaster recovery programs, said a request must come first from the state agency before it can take action.

“This isn’t really a HUD issue until we receive a request from the state,” said Charles McNally, a HUD spokesman. “If they want to request a waiver or extension, the ball’s in the state’s court.”

The state has said the December 2017 deadline remains firm.

Catie Marshall, a spokeswoman for the Governor’s Office for Storm Recovery, said only a handful of the 50 people cut off from extension funds in December have complained of any hardship, and that the December 2017 sunset date was made known to recipients.

Applicants received “clearly communicated program terms and limitations,” she said.

The program has paid out \$48 million to more than 1,700 families, 200 of which have received extension funds, she said.

But Phyllis Boland, who was forced to abandon the East Rockaway home where she had lived since 1996 by the superstorm, said she was assured by state officials in a May 2017 email and in conversations that she was entitled to the full 16-month extension. Her IMA funding ended in March 2018. Without the extension to help her cover her rent and a mortgage, Boland said she fears losing her home, facing bankruptcy or both.

“It’s like a bad dream,” Boland said.

Boland is several months late on her \$400,000 mortgage. Her new home, which is being built through another NY Rising relief program, is not due to be finished before December 2019 because her plans have not yet been approved by the village.

Without the mortgage assistance, the mother of two said she has no way to pay for two residences. Boland said her full-time job is taking care of her adult son, who is disabled.

Storm victims have faced various delays in reconstructing their homes. Some have grappled with contractors defrauding them, while others have had problems getting

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permits and plans approved, processing applications, getting their homes inspected and turning off their utilities in order to begin construction.

Sandy victims may still apply for Interim Mortgage Assistance through next month, but will only receive payments up to the end of the year and will not be eligible for any extensions, officials said.

Boland is hopeful her crisis will be resolved and said she is heartened by Rice and Kaminsky's advocacy.

“I am doing the best I can because I have to hold it together,” she said, speaking of her son and a daughter, who is to graduate college this month. “It's taken a heavy toll on me and I think it's taken a toll on many people.”

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[liherald.com](http://liherald.com)

## Board of Ed floats \$140M budget

Kaminsky secures significant boost in state aid

Posted April 5, 2018

Christina Daly/Herald

“I'm proud to have helped secure more funding for Long Beach schools so that our students can have the best learning opportunities available.”

State Senator Todd Kaminsky

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School district officials proposed a budget of about \$140 million for the 2018-19 school year at the March 22 Board of Education meeting, an increase of about \$4.7 million over the current spending plan.

The district expects to receive about \$24.3 million in state aid, according to the State Education Department. Chief Operating Officer Michael DeVito said the district was originally set to receive about \$42,000 more in state aid than it did this year, but would actually receive about \$325,000 more, and he thanked state Sen. Todd Kaminsky and Assemblywoman Melissa Miller for helping to secure the additional funding.

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“I’m proud to have helped secure more funding for Long Beach schools so that our students can have the best learning opportunities available,” Kaminsky said. “Importantly, the more money we secure from Albany, the less Long Island taxpayers are called on to shoulder the financial burden.”

School board President Stewart Mininsky said the boost in state aid would help offset the tax levy, the amount the district needs to raise through property taxes. The proposed tax levy is about \$102 million, an increase of about \$3.4 million over the current year.

While the spending plan maintains most programs and services, DeVito said that three new clubs — an Anime Club, a Chess Club and a Mindfulness Club — would be added to the high school’s list of co-curricular activities, while the Forensics Club would be eliminated. The proposed budget for next year’s co-curricular activities is about \$355,000, an increase of about \$11,000. It includes stipends for club advisers, funds for any vendor services that are needed and supplies for the drama and musical productions, DeVito explained.

The board is expected to formally adopt the budget at its next meeting, on April 12. A budget hearing is set for May 3, and the public will vote on May 15. Mininsky and board Trustee Darlene Tangney are up for re-election this year.

About \$1.3 million of the proposed budget would be used for projects that are part of the district’s five-year capital plan, including replacing the first-floor windows in West Elementary School, installing a new storage shed for the Nike program on Lido Boulevard and building a new culinary arts classroom in the high school.

“I have a suspicion — similar to what happened with our TV studio — that once we have it, it’s going to really inspire kids to engage in this program and make a career,” DeVito said of the culinary arts classroom, referring to the addition of a TV studio at the high school four years ago. “It’s wonderful what our students at the high school are doing with our new video studio over the past several years, and what it’s done for the student body. Think of what we can do now on the culinary side.”

The spending plan earmarks \$400,000 to be set aside for a new transportation building that the district plans to build in the future, at a cost of about \$4 million, DeVito said.

The cost of next year's school lunch fund is projected to be \$400,000, an increase of \$50,000 over the current year. Steve Kamlet, the district's director of food services, said that Annie's Frozen Yogurt was introduced at the middle and high schools at the beginning of the school year, and he anticipates an increase of about \$90,000 in revenue. The yogurt counts as a meal that is reimbursable by the government.

"Is Annie's Frozen Yogurt going to save the program? No, and that's not what was intended," DeVito said. "It's something that's helping to stave off the gap from growing and is actually helping to reduce the gap."

The district continues to receive reimbursements from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for costs associated with the Hurricane Sandy recovery process — to date, about \$24.5 million. The city's schools sustained about \$36 million in damage from the storm.

The most recent reimbursement, in February, was about \$1.2 million, which helped cover the cost of rebuilding the administration building. All of the storm-related construction work was completed by last summer.

"A lot of hard work went into getting the \$24.5 million from FEMA," DeVito said at the March 8 Board of Education meeting, adding that the district expects to receive about \$2 million more from the agency. The district is also expecting to receive about \$3 million in storm-recovery reimbursements from New York state.

The public will also vote on a ballot proposition that would fund capital projects including the installation of new doors and locks at the middle and high schools and East Elementary School, a new interior wall in the high school cafeteria and a new security vestibule at the Nike program site. Altogether, the projects would cost about \$925,000, and the funding would come from the capital reserve fund, which now has about \$2.8 million.

The projected budget increase was also attributed to a rise in staff salaries and a spike in health insurance costs, DeVito said — overall, about \$3.4 million. The district reached contract settlements with the Classroom Teachers Association and



the Long Beach School Employees Association last year.\

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[newsday.com](http://newsday.com)

## Sen. Kaminsky: Survey reveals LIRR commuters displeased with service

Just 18 percent of respondents reported being satisfied with LIRR service in the lawmaker's poll - in contrast to the 77 percent that the railroad said were satisfied in its last survey, released in March.

September 18, 2018

1. At a news conference at the Long Beach LIRR station on Tuesday, Sen. Todd Kaminsky discussed the results of a survey his office conducted of LIRR riders that showed riders' dissatisfaction. (Credit: Newsday / Alfonso Castillo)

By **Alfonso A. Castillo** [alfonso.castillo@newsday.com](mailto:alfonso.castillo@newsday.com) [@alfonsoreports](https://twitter.com/alfonsoreports)

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A state lawmaker's survey of Long Island Rail Road riders in his district found that, in contrast to the LIRR's own polling, the vast majority are not satisfied with the service they've been getting.

At a Long Beach LIRR station news conference Tuesday, Sen. Todd Kaminsky (D-Long Beach) joined with mayors of several Nassau villages to discuss the results of the survey conducted since Sept. 5 by his office of more than 560 railroad customers, all interviewed at the 15 stations in his district.

Just 18 percent of respondents reported being satisfied with LIRR service — in contrast to the 77 percent that the railroad reported were satisfied in its last survey, released in March. That survey included the responses of more than 13,000 riders.

"It's laughable to commuters that three out of every four people say, 'My ride is great. I like taking the railroad.' That's impossible," said Kaminsky, who believes his survey offered a more accurate accounting of LIRR riders' recent frustrations.

MTA chairman Joe Lhota said in a statement Tuesday that the LIRR and its new leadership were working diligently to right the ship, including by investing a “record \$6 billion” into modernizing the railroad, which carries 89 million riders each year.

“Phil Eng was recently brought in to turn around LIRR performance, and that is exactly what he is doing by delivering an ambitious program that identifies the causes of delays and gets them fixed quickly,” Lhota said. “The LIRR is the engine of Long Island’s economy and will move nearly 90 million passengers this year, which is exactly why we are working harder than ever to deliver the service LIRR customers deserve.”

Kaminsky's survey asked seven questions that addressed train timeliness, communications from the LIRR, the condition of trains and of Penn Station, and the value of their fare.

On a 1-to-10 scale, the railroad received average scores of 6 or lower on five of seven questions, and did not average more than 7 on any question.

"This is clearly a failing report card," Kaminsky said.

The LIRR’s own customer satisfaction survey includes 80 questions, and uses a distribution methodology to allow “for maximum representation of lines while keeping data collection as cost efficient as possible,” according to the railroad.

Kaminsky acknowledged that his survey “didn’t really have any sophisticated methodology.”



Alfonso Castillo has been reporting for Newsday since 1999 and covering the transportation beat since 2008. He grew up in the Bronx and Queens and now lives in Valley Stream with his wife and two sons.

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## Sen. Kaminsky helps to secure funds for West Hempstead Public Library

August 23, 2018, LI Herald

State Sen. Todd Kaminsky recently announced that he helped to secure \$68,235 in Library Construction Aid from the New York State Library and Education Department for the West Hempstead Public Library. This funding will account for 50 percent of a \$136,500 project for the library to upgrade their lighting to energy efficient LED fixtures.

“The West Hempstead Public Library is a pillar of our community, and its services empower residents of all ages to read, learn, and grow,” Kaminsky said. “I was pleased to secure this funding, which will go a long way in making the West Hempstead library an even better resource for the community.”

“The West Hempstead Public Library is very grateful to Senator Kaminsky for his efforts in helping to secure these funds for the West Hempstead community,” said Regina Mascia, director of the West Hempstead Public Library. “The grant money will be used to upgrade the lighting in the main library to LED lighting which will use less electricity, save money on outdated bulbs and ballasts, and will provide more “light” to the area below it.”

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## Kaminsky calls for investigation into Long Beach payouts

State senator: ‘People want to know what happened’

Posted July 18, 2018



State Sen. Todd Kaminsky called on the city to hire an outside investigator to look into recent separation payouts.

Anthony Rifilato/Herald

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State Sen. Todd Kaminsky called on the City Council on Tuesday to launch an independent investigation into recent separation payouts to a number of employees who may have been overpaid, including some who are still on the city’s payroll.

Kaminsky, a Democrat from Long Beach who has called the payouts “troubling,” urged city officials to hire an outside investigator to look into whether the payments to 62 union and non-union employees in the 2017-18 fiscal year were appropriate.

According to a list of the disbursements obtained by the Herald, 16 union and non-union employees received more than \$300,000 in separation payouts and “drawdowns” of their accumulated time in 2017-18, but remain on the payroll.

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“I believe some of the issues front and center before the council regarding separation payments have reached a suffocating point,” Kaminsky said. “People are very frustrated about their inability to get answers, and I think every taxpayer has the right to know what happened to their tax dollars. And perhaps most importantly, to have assurances that there are safeguards so that such things don’t happen again.”

In April, City Council members John Bendo and Anissa Moore voted against a \$2.1 million bond measure to make up for separation payouts to 62 union and non-union employees in fiscal year 2017-18 when they learned that a number of them remained employed by the city. Bendo and Moore questioned whether some non-union employees — including former City Manager Jack Schnirman, who was elected Nassau County comptroller in November and left his job in Long Beach in January with \$108,000 — should have received the payments they did.

Kaminsky’s comments came on the heels of a rally held outside City Hall earlier this month, at which Nassau County Legislator Denise Ford (R-Long Beach), State Assemblywoman Melissa Miller (R-Atlantic Beach) and others questioned whether an audit of the city’s finances, announced by State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli’s office in May, included a review of the payouts. They called on Nassau County District Attorney Madeline Singas to launch an investigation.

Singas, however, said that a “concurrent, ongoing” review of the payouts has been under way with DiNapoli’s office since April, and that her office would “investigate any potential crimes identified by the comptroller’s audit.”

On Twitter last week, DiNapoli stressed that the audit — which is expected to take six to nine months — would examine payroll and separation payments.

“We are coordinating with [the Nassau D.A.],” DiNapoli said in his post. “We do not discuss the specifics of an audit until it is complete.”

Kaminsky, a former federal prosecutor, called on the city to launch its own independent review — by hiring a former federal prosecutor, a forensic investigator or other experts — instead of waiting for the results of the state audit. He said that in the private sector, companies conduct internal reviews if there is “even a hint of impropriety, or scandal or even just a complaint made.”



“The companies wouldn’t say, ‘Hey look, someone’s looking around here — when they put out a report, I guess we’ll read it together,’” Kaminsky said. “. . . None of us are in control of the timing of the comptroller’s audit, and that could take a long time. And I think it’s very hard for us to move forward . . . with this cloud hanging over us.”

On Facebook, Bendo also called on the city to launch an independent investigation.

Council President Anthony Eramo said that council members were also frustrated by their inability to get answers, but he added that hiring an outside investigator would cost the city hundreds of thousands of dollars.

“We joined with you and Legislator Ford for the comptroller to come and do an audit,” Eramo told Kaminsky. “. . . I . . . do trust the New York state comptroller and the Nassau D.A., which is what the voices that cried first wanted and which we all requested. We’re looking forward to the report and examination.”

Some residents have questioned whether an audit by DiNapoli, who endorsed Schnirman in his bid for comptroller last year, would be impartial.

Asked after Tuesday’s meeting whether he had confidence in DiNapoli’s and Singas’s reviews, Kaminsky said, “I have no reason to believe that they are not going to do a thorough job.”

“I think the city should want information on its own timeline and institute reforms based on that information as soon as possible,” he added.

Before the meeting, Eramo told the Herald that the city had ended its practice of giving drawdowns for accumulated sick, vacation and personal time to employees still on the payroll, and that the city was awaiting the results of the comptroller’s report to make further policy changes.

An attorney for the city said that launching an outside investigation could potentially compromise the D.A.’s and comptroller’s reviews.

“We can debate that all night,” Kaminsky said. “From Fortune 500 companies to mom-and-pop stores, when people have gotten subpoenas — much worse circumstances than we’ve seen here — people have called in people to do their own assessment.”