

UNWIND

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SPORTS

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SPACES

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TIMES UNION

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For area students, echoes of redlining



Jim Franco/Times Union

A student walks down Regal Avenue after school at Jessie T. Zoller Elementary School on Thursday in Schenectady. Zoller's attendance zone — a boundary that determines where a student goes to school — was redrawn to include half of a low-income area along Van Vranken Avenue.

Schenectady school attendance zones mirror how neighborhoods were divided

By Kathleen Moore
STAFF WRITER

Some Schenectady neighborhoods that were redlined to stop development during a racist and antimigrant wave a century ago are still divided along those lines in today's school attendance zones, a report found.

The report also looked closely at the elementary school boundaries in Albany, where the attendance zones — boundaries that determine where a student goes to school, depending on where

they live — now divide up historically "redlined" neighborhoods among multiple schools in an effort to improve equality.

In both cities, the neighborhoods that had the most wealthy, white residents still have their own schools today, though attendance zone revisions over the years have allowed some of their neighbors to attend those schools as well. But in Schenectady, students living in neighborhoods that were historically denied investment are largely locked

See **REDLINING**, A6

TIMES UNION INVESTIGATION



Will Waldron/Times Union

Assemblyman Ron Kim said he's observed rampant electioneering by nonprofits in his Queens district in violation of the law.

Nonprofits continue to wade into politics

Hundreds of not-for-profit groups in N.Y. have made illegal donations in last decade

By Emilie Munson
STAFF WRITER

ALBANY — Longtime state Assemblyman Ron Kim has for years watched as nonprofit organizations in his Queens district have used their money and connections to unlawfully try to influence elections. He said they act as if they're "untouchable."

"They realize that no one is really monitoring or no one is really going to enforce any of this," Kim said. "They learn every cycle how to campaign without actually following the rules, and it's gotten much bigger."

The unlawful practices, which have resulted in few, if any, legal consequences for the nonprofits, have ranged from handing out literature with his opponents' images to making direct contributions to candidates in communities that can be integral to the outcome of elections.

Kim estimates the organizations collectively may have improperly spent "millions of dollars" when considering all of the resources they have devoted to campaigns.

His suspicions may be warranted. In the past decade, hundreds of New York nonprofits, which often are formed to provide integral services to underserved communities, have donated to political campaigns despite federal and state laws that prohibit it, a Times Union investigation found.

Roughly two-thirds of those institutions have filed detailed tax documents with the Internal Revenue Service in which they claimed under penalty of perjury they were not involved in politics — an assertion that routinely appears to be left unverified by the government.

Despite the brazen violations of state and federal statutes, a Times Union investigation found the political activities rarely have repercussions for the charitable organizations or their operators. Nor are there many legal

See **NONPROFITS**, A10

FISHING BAN STILL STANDS



Photos by Will Waldron/Times Union

Hudson River water flows past the former site of a General Electric capacitor plant, where toxic PCB chemicals were once legally discharged into the river until 1977 in Fort Edward.

But warnings not to eat or keep most fish from the Hudson — due to PCB contamination — haven't broken through to everyone



A sign warning of the dangers of consuming PCB-contaminated fish is posted by the Hudson River at Champlain Canal Lock C6 in Fort Miller.

By Roger Hannigan Gilson
STAFF WRITER

For more than 50 years, New York has warned people not to eat fish from the Hudson River.

The advisory dates to Aug. 7, 1975, when the state began telling residents that fish caught in the river could be dangerous to consume. Carcinogenic polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, released from two General Electric plants had contaminated the river, prompting the Environmental Protection Agency to declare its lower 200 miles a Superfund site in 1983.

PCBs are sometimes referred to as "forever chemicals" because they do not readily break down in the envi-

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WEATHER: Rainy, breezy in the morning.
High: 52° / Low: 31° / Details, A2



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