

Assemblyman
JEFFRION L. AUBRY
Reports to the People

**35TH A.D. • QUEENS COUNTY
SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE**



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BUDGET



Dear Constituents,

I am pleased to provide you with an overview of the Governor’s proposed budget for the 2014-15 fiscal year. While every element of the Governor’s financial proposal is not provided in this newsletter, I have included a broad overview of the Executive’s financial plan and revenues, spending implications, and spending initiatives. This budget summary also includes an outline of money allocated to new education, health care, and housing initiatives that will affect our district. As my constituents, I know you share the legislature’s goal of enacting an on-time budget based on a principle of fairness to all New Yorkers. As my fellow colleagues and I begin our work on passing this year’s budget, rest assured that we will continue to reinforce our commitment to the safety and education of our children, protecting our communities, and providing support to the most vulnerable among us.

Sincerely,

Jeffrion L. Aubry
Member of Assembly
35th A.D., Queens County

**NEW STATE ECONOMIC AND
JOB PROJECTIONS**

The Executive Budget economic forecast indicates that the employment in the private sector continues to grow strongly. The Executive Budget further projects a 1.5% increase in private employment growth in 2014 and 2015.

- Employment growth is likely to occur in the leisure, hospitality, and construction fields.
- The growth in these sectors has begun to thrive as a result of the upturn in the real estate market.

The Executive Budget estimates that ongoing downsizing in the financial sector and lower employment in the public sector will adversely affect wage growth in the state.

- According to the Executive Budget, state wages are projected to grow 5.4% in 2014 and by 4.6% in 2015.

EDUCATION

The Executive Budget reflects a strong commitment to education. As such, School Aid continues to represent the largest State-supported program, accounting for about 29 % of General Fund spending. For the 2014-15 school year, it provides support for several key initiatives, including a \$2 billion Smart Schools bond act, an investment of \$1.5 billion over five years to implement a statewide Universal Full-Day Pre-Kindergarten program, and an investment of \$720 million over five years to expand after-school programs.

General Support for Public Schools (GSPS): The executive budget proposes a year-to-year increase in GSPS of \$807 million, increasing

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

SIZE OF BUDGET IN MILLION\$

	2013-14	2014-15	Difference	Percent
General Funds	\$61,460	\$63,563	\$2,103	3.4%
State Operating Funds	\$90,498	\$92,027	\$1,529	1.7%
State Funds	\$96,624	\$98,874	\$2,250	2.3%
All Funds	\$135,350	\$137,168	\$1,818	1.3%
All Funds Adjusted*	\$140,865	\$142,141	\$1,276	0.9%

The above illustration reflects the size of the 2014-15 budget which totals \$137.2 billion without federal funding and \$142.1 billion with federal health care funding and hurricane sandy funding.

EDUCATION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

aid to public schools from \$21.08 billion to \$21.88 billion. This aid includes \$682 million for school aid, \$100 million for full-day Pre-Kindergarten Programs, \$2 billion for Smart School initiatives, and \$720 million for after-school programs.

• Universal Pre-Kindergarten

Governor Cuomo's Statewide Universal Full-Day Pre-Kindergarten program (\$1.5 billion)

The Executive Budget builds on its commitment to early childhood education by investing \$1.5 billion over five years to support the phase-in of a Statewide Universal Full-Day Pre-Kindergarten program. This year, the State will provide total funding of \$100 million, focusing expansion on the highest-need students first. In each subsequent school year, the State's commitment will grow by at least an additional \$100 million.

Mayor DeBlasio's Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program & JHS After School Program (NYC)

Mayor De Blasio, like the Governor, has acknowledged the importance of early childhood education and has also expressed his commitment to funding a NYC Universal Pre-Kindergarten program. However, the two men differ on how to fund such a program. Standing in contrast to the Governor, who plans to fund Universal Pre-K with existing money in the State budget, Mayor de Blasio intends to stand true to his commitment to tax the wealthiest New Yorkers to fund his Universal Pre-K program and his JHS After School Program. According to our Mayor, a small increase in the tax rates on New York City residents who make \$500,000 or more annually is the only steady, reliable way to cover the \$530 million annual cost of the programs.

• Other Education Initiatives

- **After-school Programs (\$720 million).** In an effort to provide more enrichment opportunities for students, the Executive Budget allocates \$720 million over a five-year period to expand after-school programs across the State.
- **Target School Aid Increases to High-Need School Districts.** The Executive Budget allocates \$682 million in school aid; 70% of this allotment will be directed to high-need school districts. \$285 million of the \$682 million allocated will support reimbursement in expense-based aid programs like school construction, pupil transportation, and BOCES.
- **Smart Schools (\$2 billion).** The Executive Budget recommends a \$2 billion general obligation bond act, to be brought before voters in November 2014. Bond proceeds will fund enhanced education technology in schools, with eligible projects including infrastructure improvements to bring high-speed broadband to schools and communities in their school district and the purchase of classroom technology for use by students.

Together, these initiatives will continue to transform public education across the State—reaching students earlier, providing more enrichment opportunities, and leveraging the power of technology in state-of-the-art classrooms to help prepare students to be college and career ready.

IMPORTANT EDUCATION LEGISLATION TO WATCH

• The DREAM Act A.2597-A Moya, Aubry

In an effort to advance the educational opportunities of children of immigrants this bill, known as the DREAM ACT, would create a DREAM fund that would provide scholarships to college-bound children who are the children of immigrants. The bill would eliminate potential financial obstacles to obtaining State financial aid and extend the opportunities for certain immigrant students to attend higher education institutions in this State; provid-

ing a benefit consistent with U.S. citizens and nationals. To save for their families higher education expenses, this legislation would allow the families of immigrant children, to open a New York State 529 family tuition account under the New York State College Tuition Savings Program and/or be a designated beneficiary on an account if they have a taxpayer identification number.

• Crossing Guard Legislation A.8604 DenDekker, Aubry

To ensure greater safety for our children as they pass to and from school, I have co-sponsored legislation that would place school crossing guards on each and every corner of a city block containing a public or private school serving students enrolled in grades kindergarten through eight. Ad-

ditionally, if the school borders a street with four or more traffic lanes, the City of New York shall be required to place additional school crossing guards on the opposite corners of these busy thoroughfares during arrival and dismissal times as set forth by the school.

• Use of School Facilities by Not-for-Profit and Charitable Organizations A.3063 Aubry

I have re-introduced legislation that would allow not-for-profit and charitable organizations to have access to school facilities in each community school district or regular school district to sponsor after-school programs. Such programs offer young people a chance to improve their social development and promote physical fitness in a safe and stimulating

environment. A number of after school programs operate within school facilities. This bill merely encourages more not-for-profit and charitable organizations to become an additional source of sponsors to conduct such after school programs for our children.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The Executive Budget builds on its commitment to education by providing \$3.239 billion in appropriations for higher education, a \$26 million increase from last year.

- **Scheduled Tuition Increases**

Unfortunately, the Executive Budget includes additional spending authority of \$95 million for SUNY and \$61 million for CUNY related to tuition increases that were authorized in 2011. Rest assured that my Assembly colleagues and I will work tirelessly to ensure that tuition remains affordable for all New York State students.

- **Community Colleges**

The Executive Budget maintains its support for SUNY and CUNY Community Colleges and keeps funding at \$2,422 per full time equivalent (FTE) student.

- **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Scholarships (\$8 million)**

The Executive proposes the creation of a full-tuition scholarship for the top 10% of high school graduates if they choose to attend a SUNY or CUNY school, and agree to pursue a career in a STEM field.

- **Connect the NY Youth Works Program to Community Colleges**

To encourage more employers to hire inner-city youth, the Executive Budget will tie the occupational training component of the NY Youth Works Program to the Job Linkage Program—an initiative established to combat youth unemployment. Businesses that want to hire under the NY Youth Works Program, but need the youth to be trained, could partner with a community college that will offer a specialized certification under the Job Linkage program.

HEALTH

- **Medicaid Redesign Team Proposals**

The Executive Budget continues the implementation of MRT recommendations. A cost-neutral package of new MRT initiatives is proposed to make critical investments in health care delivery, which include:

- Making additional funding available for affordable housing.
- Making increased payments to essential community providers.
- Leveraging Health Homes to establish better linkages and improve care coordination for the mentally ill and criminal justice populations.
- Facilitating the transition of foster care children into managed care.

- **New York Health Benefit Exchange**

In 2013, the Governor issued Executive Order to establish a New York Health Benefit Exchange. The Health Plans offered through NY State of Health are on average 53% less expensive than individual coverage purchased in 2013 for comparable coverage.

So far, over 580,000 New Yorkers have completed applications and more than 326,000 have enrolled in coverage. Federal funding for the initial operations of the New York Health Benefit Exchange will end January 1, 2015, and the Executive Budget provides \$54.3 million in 2014-15, growing to \$148.3 million in State funding, between the DOH and Department of Financial Service budgets, to sustain its continued operations.

HOUSING

- **Community Renewal**

Enhancement of the House NY program: The Executive Budget proposes to expand the House NY program by providing an additional \$40 million in new capital resources for the construction and renovation of affordable housing for low-income and homeless individuals and families.

- **Investment of \$100 million in Storm Recovery Funds for Affordable Housing**

The Executive Budget allocates a new \$100 million in federal storm recovery funds to create and preserve 3,000 affordable housing units in multi-family developments.

MASS TRANSIT

The Executive Budget makes new capital investments to improve the transportation system, enhance its resiliency, and core infrastructure and create jobs. The Executive Budget provides the MTA with over \$4.3 billion in funding, an increase of more than \$85 million from the 2013-14 fiscal year.

DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES

- Commission on Youth, Public Safety and Justice

The Executive Budget proposes the creation of a commission to develop recommendations on how New York can responsibly raise the age of juvenile jurisdiction while at the same time ensuring public safety.

- Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services

Weather Detection System: The Executive Budget proposes using \$15 million in Federal Sandy Relief funding to establish and operate a state-of-the-art weather detection system in a collaborative process with an academic partner and private entity.

IMPORTANT CRIMINAL JUSTICE LEGISLATION TO WATCH

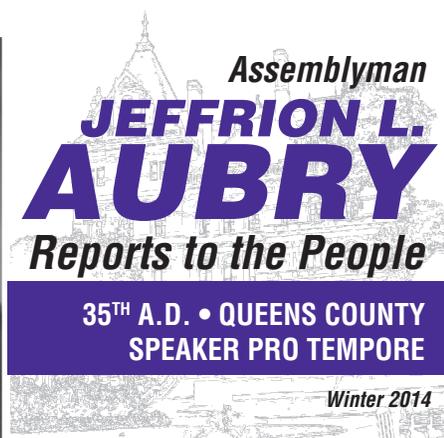
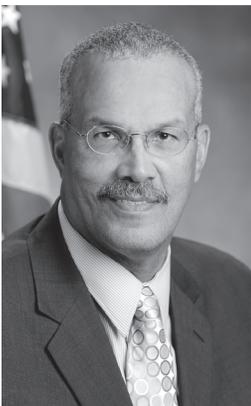
- The HALT Solitary Confinement Act A.8588 Aubry

I have recently introduced legislation known as the “Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement” Act (HALT Solitary Confinement Act) that would limit the time an inmate can spend in segregated confinement. This bill would end the segregated confinement of vulnerable

people, restrict the criteria that determines who is put in solitary housing units, improve conditions of confinement, and create more humane and effective alternatives to confinement.

- The Domestic Violence Survivors Act A.4314-B Aubry

I have re-introduced legislation that would allow judges the opportunity to re-sentence currently incarcerated persons for offenses in which certain domestic violence criteria was a significant element of the offense.



Assemblyman **JEFFRION L. AUBRY** Highlights of the Executive Budget

- New State Economic and Job Projections
 - Education / Important Education Legislation to Watch / Higher Education
 - Health Care
 - Housing
 - Mass Transit
 - Division of Criminal Justice Services/ Important Criminal Justice Legislation to Watch