



NEWS FROM NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLYMAN **PETER J. ABBATE, JR.**

49th Assembly District, Brooklyn

Spring 2016

Dear Neighbor,

One of the most important things I do in Albany every year is debate and pass the New York State Budget. This funding is crucial for our communities and the State, and is a reflection of our values and principles.

After arduous debate and input from my constituents and stakeholders, I am happy to report this budget is one of the best in recent years. My colleagues and I in the Assembly Majority stood up for what our families in this State need to get ahead and thrive, and this budget includes so many of the dynamic issues and policies we have been fighting long and hard for.

The \$146.7 billion plan invests in education, helps lift families out of poverty, allows more New Yorkers to get a college education, cuts taxes and helps grow the State economy. The final budget includes a significant investment in our schools, provides New Yorkers with a minimum wage increase, implements a long-awaited Paid Family Leave Program and safeguards our communities with safe roads and infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Peter J. Abbate, Jr.

Community Update

Once again, my office was proud to participate in the Neighborhood Heating Fund sponsored by Heartshare and National Grid. This Program helps families in need pay for heating fuel over the harsh winter months. This year, everyone who qualified received a \$200 credit on their home heating bill. We were able to secure over \$8,000 worth of funding for more than 40 applicants.

Women of Distinction Awards 2016



As a way to participate in Women's History Month this year, I proudly honored five women who exemplify commendable service and dedication to our community. The Women of Distinction Awards were held in my District Office in March.

I was delighted to present awards to: Barbara Turchio, Community Liaison and NIA (Neighborhood Improvement Association) Site Supervisor, Maggie Gu, Small business owner and entrepreneur, Haney Ho, Vice President of the Brooklyn Chinese American Association, Laurie Windsor, President of CEC 20, and Genevieve Incontrera, Director of the Bethanny Senior Center. These awards reflect our community's appreciation and gratitude for all the outstanding work these women do in our community.

Offices

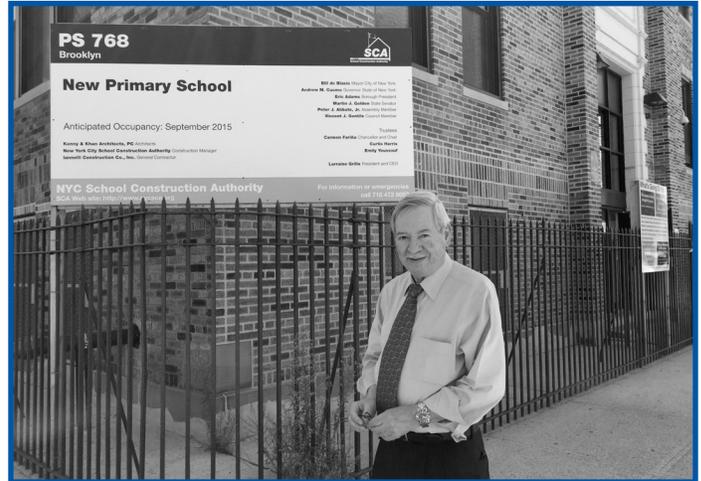
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NYS Budget Invests in Our Schools and Our Children

We owe it to New York's children to provide a good, comprehensive education that challenges and empowers them. This year's budget strengthens both our public and private school systems so it fosters innovation and instills in all students a desire to learn and grants every child a fair shot at success. Some highlights of this year's budget include:

- The 2016-17 NYS budget increases education aid by \$1.47 billion – or 6.3 percent – for a total of \$24.7 billion, representing the largest investment in education in New York history.
- \$1 million for Career and Technical Education (CTE), while specifying that the funding must be used to reduce barriers faced by English language learners and students with disabilities.
- Ensuring all New York State schools are fairly funded and have the resources needed to provide a quality education; this State budget increases Foundation Aid by \$627 million.
- This budget includes a \$2.3 million increase in funding for 4201 schools for the blind and the deaf.
- Recognizing the importance and lasting benefit of early childhood education, this budget provides \$807 million for continued implementation and development of the Statewide Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program.
- This year's budget continues funding for the Smart Schools Program, which increases and improves education technology and infrastructure in schools throughout the State, at \$2 billion.
- Non-Public and Parochial schools are receiving \$10.5 million in additional funds for safety equipment, for a total of \$15 million. This includes flexibility in using such funds for health, safety and security needs as well as \$60 million in additional funding (available after April 1, 2017) through the Mandated Services Reimbursement.
- In order for our schools to remain resilient, my colleagues and I in the Assembly acknowledge that this budget needed our investment in teacher training to ensure they have the skills necessary to educate our children. This budget includes \$14.3 million for Teacher Resource and Computer Training Centers and \$475,000 to restore funding for the Executive Leadership Institute, which offers professional development programs for school administrators. We also fully rejected the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA); putting an end to the hardship the GEA has caused our schools and helping to prevent teacher layoffs.



NYS Passes Historic \$15 an hour Minimum Wage Bill



Every New Yorker who puts in an honest day's work deserves a livable wage. This year's State budget increases the minimum wage helping to lift working families out of poverty and providing them with a pathway to the middle class. This minimum wage increase reflects the disparate cost of living and economic realities in various regions of New York State.

There will be different phase-in periods for upstate and downstate communities:

- In New York City, the minimum wage will increase to \$11 an hour at the end of 2016, followed by \$2 increases each year after, reaching \$15 an hour on December 31, 2018.
- For New York City businesses with 10 or fewer employees, the minimum wage will increase to \$10.50 an hour at the end of 2016.

Making Higher Education a Priority



We cannot expect our students to obtain respectable employment and achieve economic security if they cannot afford the very thing that will get them there – a college degree. We must do all we can to make higher education more accessible while preventing students from falling into the black hole of student loan debt. The State Assembly said “NO” to tuition hikes proposed by the Governor, significantly aiding students with the affordability of attending any SUNY or CUNY school.

The 2016-17 budget ensures that tuition at SUNY and CUNY schools, such as Brooklyn or Kingsborough College, will not be raised during the coming academic year because every New Yorker has the right to receive an affordable college education. This budget also provides an increase of \$12 million in operating funds for CUNY.

Furthermore, in a victory for the CUNY system, the budget excludes the Governor’s proposal to shift \$485 million of CUNY operating expenses to New York City, hence, protecting and maintaining the quality of educational programs offered. The City of New York should not be forced to unfairly foot the bill for State costs.

Helping Working Families Succeed

This year’s State budget ensures that families have access to child care opportunities, tax credits for working families and includes the nation’s most expansive paid family leave law to make sure working parents can pursue their careers with peace of mind.

- In order to provide additional assistance to working and middle-income families, this budget incrementally reduces the middle-class tax rates for single filers earning between \$13,000 and \$200,000, heads of households earning between \$19,500 and \$250,000, and married couples earning between \$26,000 and \$300,000.
- This year, we have allocated \$10.6 million for facilitated enrollment, which provides 12 months of child care subsidies for working and middle-income families who meet employment and income requirements.



Introducing State-Wide Paid Family Leave

The 2016-17 NYS budget includes a paid family leave provision that, when fully phased in, will afford employees 12 weeks of paid leave per year to care for a new child or family member in need. The measure will be funded through a small weekly employee contribution and offer up to two-thirds of an employee’s salary during their absence, not to exceed two-thirds of the statewide average weekly wage. The policy will be implemented at a gradual rate; starting in 2018 with 8 weeks of paid leave offered at 50 percent of weekly income; the benefit will increase to 10 weeks in 2019; and employees will be able to take 12 weeks of paid leave at the full two-thirds of weekly pay in 2021. Workers will be eligible for the program after six months of employment.

Protecting and Helping Seniors

Seniors have built their lives in our neighborhoods and have played an integral role in helping our communities grow vibrant. My favorite events I host each year are the Senior Proms in May and the Senior Picnics in September at Fort Hamilton. Giving back to our seniors is so rewarding to me and protecting their services is one of my top priorities in Albany. This year's budget helps more elderly New Yorkers remain in their own homes and helps to ensure they receive the best possible care so they can continue to play an important role in our communities.

- We've included \$1 million in additional funding to support Community Services for the Elderly, which helps our community's better serve seniors and ensuring their needs are met.
- The Assembly proposal also restores \$10 million to preserve spousal refusal, ensuring couples do not lose their life savings in the event a spouse becomes ill. For seniors living on a fixed income, this program is vital because the costs of long-term care can be financially ruinous.
- This budget includes vital funding to support long-term care, including \$11.2 million to prevent the carve-out of long-term care transportation management.



Assemblyman

PETER ABBATE, JR.



SPRING 2016



Battling New York's Heroin Epidemic

New York's spending plan for fiscal year 2016-17 will make critical investments to fight the growing heroin and opioid epidemic in our State and help protect public health with appropriations totaling \$28 million – a significant increase over last year's budget.

Specifically, the approved budget includes \$25 million for the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services to implement a Heroin and Opiate Treatment Prevention Package. Additionally, \$2 million has been included to support Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists (SAPIS); in order to provide continued programming in New York City schools.