



MONDAY APRIL 6TH 2015



New York State Assembly Weekly Report From Assistant Speaker Felix W. Ortiz

Last week, the Legislature approved a state budget for the new fiscal year starting on April 1. Our budget puts New York's families first:

- We restored much-needed funding for our schools, making it possible for more students to achieve a college education and helping struggling families
- The \$150.3 billion plan also funds numerous economic development projects to create more jobs and continues the state's fiscal discipline by holding spending growth to less than 2 percent for the fifth consecutive year

Investing in our schools

- When it comes to our schools, students have to be our top priority
- The budget secures a \$1.6 billion increase in education aid over last year, for a total of \$23 billion including
 - over \$9.2 billion for New York City Schools, which is roughly \$505 million more than last year;
 - a \$19 million increase to support grants for a total of \$90 million;
 - \$75 million in grants for struggling schools;
 - \$20 million in grants, including aid for libraries, teacher centers and bilingual education; and
- Additionally, the budget protects last year's pre-K investment in New York City

Building the Higher Education Road to Success

- Access to college is a priority; the budget invests in New York's public higher education system and includes an increase in support for CUNY community colleges of \$100 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student, for a total of \$2,597 per FTE student

Investing in economic development

- The final budget includes \$365,000 in additional funding for the Minority- and Women-owned Business Development and Lending Program, for a total of \$1 million
- The budget also requires the MWBE Disparity Study to be completed in six months, rejecting the one-year extension the executive proposed

Expanding access to affordable housing

- \$100 million for New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) capital repairs, while also requiring the NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal and NYCHA to develop a plan detailing how the funds will be used; and
- It also provides \$34.7 million for community development programs and \$155.5 million for other affordable housing programs
- And it restores \$742,000 in funding to the New York City Housing Authority Tenant Watch Program

Continuing the fight for accessible, affordable health care

- Thanks to the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA), 2 million New Yorkers now have health insurance through the state's health care exchange
- The final budget implements the Basic Health Program, which would be available under the ACA
- The Basic Health Program would expand affordable health insurance to approximately 438,000 New Yorkers
- In an effort to help the poor and elderly, the final budget restores \$78.9 million to Medicaid, and \$10.7 million to preserve spousal refusal, which protects couples from losing their life savings in the event that a spouse requires long-term care

Increasing transparency and cracking down on corruption

- By requiring greater disclosure, transparency and accountability, this year's state budget makes a series of ethics reforms to help restore the public's trust in government
- The state budget requires public officials to disclose outside income they receive from non-government employment on their annual financial disclosure forms

Protecting our environment

- The budget continues to invest in environmental conservation and cleanup efforts to ensure the long-term health of our communities
- The final budget provides for a \$15 million increase in funding for the Environmental Protection Fund – for a total of \$177 million – and a 10-year extension of the Brownfield Cleanup program, which helps redevelop previously contaminated properties
- It also includes an increase to the financing authorization for the Superfund Program – which helps clean up contaminated properties – by \$1 billion over a 10-year period

Strengthening NY's criminal justice system

- The agreement includes:
 - a total of \$12.27 million to support various legislative restorations, including \$1 million for the New York State Defenders Association;
 - \$5.58 million in the Legal Services Assistance Fund, including \$2.8 million for civil and criminal legal services grants and \$1.2 million for Prisoners' Legal Services;
 - \$2.2 million for domestic violence-related civil and criminal legal services support;
 - \$715,267 for alternative to incarceration programs; and
 - \$600,000 to support immigrant legal services

\$60 million towards providing new bulletproof vests and bulletproof glass for police patrol cars, an issue I championed after two NYPD officers were killed last year.

Supporting our veterans

- The final budget includes \$350,000 for the Veterans Entrepreneurial Assistance Program to provide veterans the training they need to start a new business
- Our veterans and their families have made unimaginable sacrifices to defend our freedoms
- Now it's time we help provide them with the opportunities and support they need

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