



E-News April 2015

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2015-2016 Budget Issue

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Freedom Fund Dinner

On Thursday, April 16, at 6:30pm, the Nyack Branch of the NAACP will hold its 57th Freedom Fund Dinner at the Pearl River Hilton.

2015 Freedom Fund Dinner Honorees

- Apostle Dorian Elizabeth Alston
- Josephine A. Bailey
- Bill Batson
- John Castellano
- Pastor Mireille R. Desrosiers
- Dorothy Harris
- Barbara S. Williams, MSW

To purchase tickets contact Voncile Oliver at (845) 268-6626 or Maria Whittingham at (845) 664-8492.

Dear Neighbors,

The 2015-16 state budget was a difficult and unprecedented process because the Governor used this year's budget to push his unpopular education reforms. My Assembly colleagues and I fought hard, [negotiating revisions to the Governor's proposals](#) and winning some concessions. We're also working to limit high-stakes testing and ensure that input from local schools, superintendents, teachers and parents is part of this critical discussion about how we can improve public education here in Rockland and across the state. I will continue to advocate for more state funds for our public schools, communities, and municipalities. Investing in a well-educated work force, our small businesses, and infrastructure is the path to economic security.

Warmest Regards,

- Ellen C. Jaffee

Investing in Families and Children High-quality, affordable child care is a top priority. The final budget makes smart investments in child care and early childhood education, as well as in vital programs and services to support families and our most vulnerable.

- Increases funding to improve our child-care system and ensure every family has access to child care
- Expands eligibility for child care assistance to working families with incomes up to 275 percent of the federal poverty level, allowing more parents to stay employed while their children are cared for
- Increases pre-K funding for 3- and 4-year-olds throughout the state. This funding was originally proposed only for NYC.
- Funds the Kinship Caregiver Program to help caregivers access health, education, financial, and legal services for children in their care
- Funds the Displaced Homemaker Program to provide counseling and job training to homemakers helping them become economically independent
- Increases funding for Non-Residential Domestic Violence Services to assist domestic violence victims

Investing in Public Schools and Public Higher Education The final budget restores much-needed funding for our public schools and public higher education system to help all students reach their full potential.

- \$1.6 billion increase in education aid, including \$1.3 billion in direct formula aid to schools
- \$19 million increase to support grants, including aid for libraries and teacher centers
- Implements the Assembly's *Higher Education Road to Success* to ease barriers to college
- Increases support for SUNY Community Colleges, including a 20 percent increase to opportunity programs at SUNY
- Increases library aid from \$5M to \$91.6M, and eliminates the MTA library tax because libraries are education

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Investing in Economic Development and Job Creation The final budget builds on the progress we've made to strengthen New York's economy and keep the momentum going.

- \$350,000 for the Veterans Entrepreneurial Assistance Program to provide veterans the training they need to start a new business
- \$365,000 in additional funding for the Minority- and Women-Owned Business Development and Lending Program
- Provides an additional \$1.5 million for the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to strengthen small-businesses in our community
- Provides \$400 million over five years for a new Regional Significant Infrastructure Program to promote local economic development through workforce development, manufacturing, agriculture and tourism initiatives

Investing in Quality, 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. To ensure even more New Yorkers can afford health care, the final budget implements the **Basic Health Program**, which would be available under the ACA.

- Expands affordable health insurance to approximately 438,000 New Yorkers
- Provides insurance to people whose incomes are between 133 and 200 percent of the federal poverty level and are therefore not eligible for Medicaid
- 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
- Rolls back the Governor's shortsighted cuts and makes a strong commitment to vital public health programs

CHIPs Program to Repair and Restore Roads I joined my Assembly colleagues in seeking funds for CHIPs to help local governments repair and restore roads and highways following the damage caused by this winter's extreme cold weather. The Assembly secured a \$50 million increase in CHIPs funding for a total appropriation of \$488 million.

Transportation Capital Project Funding To help improve the state's transportation infrastructure to ensure roads, bridges and highways are reliable, safe and efficient, funding for the Department of Transportation's Capital Program will be increased by \$250 million above the Executive Budget for the next two years, providing \$100 million in 2015-16 and \$150 million in 2016-17.



April is Donate Life Month

According to the New York Alliance for Donation, "Every year, more than 1,500 people receive kidneys, livers, and hearts that have been donated. But with more than 10,000 New Yorkers still on waiting lists, the need for organ donations far exceeds the supply. One person who donates organs (hearts, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas and intestine) can save up to eight lives, while tissue donors (corneas, bone, skin, heart valves, tendons, veins, etc.) can improve 12 or more lives by restoring eyesight, helping fight infections in burn patients and prevent the loss of mobility and disability."

When you enroll in the [Donate Life New York State Organ and Tissue Donor Registry](#), you are giving legal consent for the recovery of your organs, tissues and eyes for the purposes of transplantation and research at the time of your death.