



ASSEMBLYWOMAN

Addie J. Russell

Reports to the people of the 116th Assembly District

Dulles State Office Building, Suite 210
317 Washington St., Watertown, NY 13601



Russell secured an **additional \$500,000 in discretionary aid for Jefferson County schools** on top of the **\$5.6 million increase** in school aid funding from last year

Supporting military children

Assemblywoman Russell knows that supporting our troops means supporting their families, too. This year, she sponsored and helped pass legislation to alleviate the issues commonly faced by military children as a result of frequent relocation. By smoothing the transfer of school transcripts and records, Assemblywoman Russell has helped make sure that deserving students can graduate on time.

Reforming Common Core

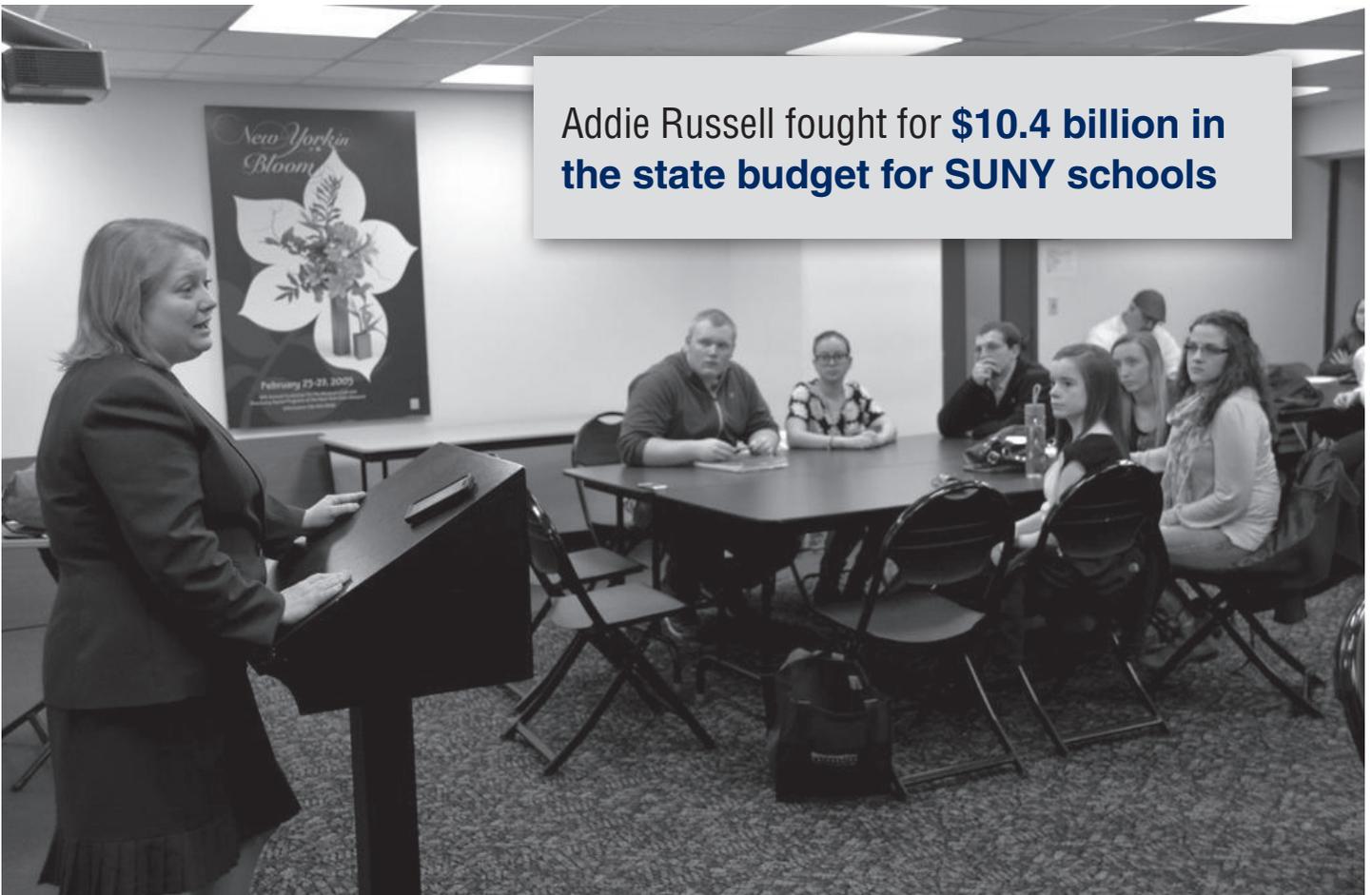
Common Core, while well-intentioned, was implemented terribly. The pace of the transition was pushed too fast, the curriculum hastily created and there was little or no support for our educators, who received flawed materials days before they were expected to teach them. Students and teachers have spent a full year working through the state's mess. In response, the Assembly has reformed Common Core to protect our kids, teachers and administrators from unfair consequences based upon test results, and has curtailed the sharing of student data.

Investing in North Country schools

Nothing is more important to our future than ensuring our children receive a quality education. Years of budget cuts have resulted in reduced staff, increased class sizes and cuts to programs like art and music that keep students engaged in their education.

This year, Assemblywoman Russell again made fighting to restore aid to our schools a top priority. She secured \$5.6 million more for Jefferson County schools than last year as well as an additional \$500,000 in discretionary aid.

Securing these funds is a step in the right direction, but until the harmful Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) is done away with, North Country schools will continue to receive less than their fair share of funding. Assemblywoman Russell is fighting for complete elimination of the GEA by next year.



Addie Russell fought for **\$10.4 billion in the state budget for SUNY schools**

Lowering the cost of higher education

With the cost of higher education continuing to rise, Assemblywoman Russell made it a priority to secure \$10.4 billion in the state budget for SUNY schools.

Further, Assemblywoman Russell helped create a new scholarship program that will provide full-tuition scholarships to the top 10 percent of high school graduates attending SUNY schools. To be eligible, participants must pursue a Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM) degree and then work in New York for five years following graduation.

Additionally, Assemblywoman Russell has helped students afford college by increasing funding for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) for the first time in 14 years and restoring funding for other college opportunity programs. The maximum TAP award will be increased by \$165 for a maximum award of \$5,165 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student.

Russell continues to fight for Jefferson Community College

Assemblywoman Russell was able to secure an agreement between the Senate, Assembly and governor for state-matching funds of over \$6 million for Jefferson Community College's Collaborative Learning Center and will work to finalize the plan in the next session. The Center is an innovative model that combines traditional library functions with support components such as advising, counseling and tutoring.

Summer Reading Challenge

Assemblywoman Russell's Summer Reading Challenge is underway. This program helps students strengthen their literacy skills during the summer months. To participate in the Summer Reading Challenge, children must read by themselves or with a partner for a minimum of 15 minutes every day for at least 40 days throughout the months of July and August. Reading can be tracked on a provided calendar and submitted to Assemblywoman Russell. Those who participate will be awarded a New York State Assembly Excellence in Reading Certificate.



For more information about the 2014 Summer Reading Challenge, please visit summerreadingnys.org or contact Assemblywoman Russell's office.



Assemblywoman Russell met with the New York State County Highway Superintendents Association to discuss infrastructure needs

Lowering taxes and growing the North Country economy

Farming plays a vital role in our economy. In fact, New York recently reclaimed its place as the third largest dairy producer in the country. Assemblywoman Russell is working to ensure farmers have the resources they need.

Assemblywoman Russell helped cut an energy tax on residents and businesses, saving taxpayers \$200 million a year over the next three years. And she helped reform the estate tax to ensure farms are passed on to loved ones – not the tax department.

“Farmers face enough challenges to their livelihood as it is. Burdensome taxes on the land and energy they need to make a living and produce our food are taking a toll,” said Assemblywoman Russell. **“Updating our tax laws to reflect current economic realities will help our farmers and, in turn, boost our economy—especially here in the North Country.”**

Investing in infrastructure

Assemblywoman Russell spearheaded the effort to provide supplemental highway funds in this year’s budget, anticipating limited local resources as a result of the severe winter. Her efforts helped secure \$6.3 million in additional funding for Jefferson County and its localities.

Kicking off a 4th round of REDCs

Last year, for the third year in a row, the North Country Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) was named a top performer and secured \$81.3 million for local projects. As a member of the North Country REDC, Assemblywoman Russell will continue to work to develop proposals aimed at creating private sector jobs, training our workers in advanced manufacturing, promoting the beautiful natural resources of the North Country and developing Clarkson University as an Innovation Hot Spot.



Renewable energy

Renewable fuels have the potential to create jobs here in the North Country and will help keep money spent on fuel local, instead of sending it overseas. A recent Clarkson University study found that nearly 8 million tons of biomass could be gathered sustainably from the region every year without endangering forests.

To develop the potential of this new industry, Assemblywoman Russell introduced and passed a bill to expand tax credits to include cellulosic ethanol – produced from willows, grasses and northern hardwoods – and densified biofuels, such as wood pellets (A.9525-A). While traditional biofuels are produced from food-derived oils, these types of renewable fuels are created using products that are abundant in the North Country, including making use of forest residue from local timber harvesting.

Important news for seniors

This year's state budget:

- Protects seniors from surprise medical bills if they are unknowingly treated by an out-of-network doctor;
- Expands eligibility for the Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) program to help lower the cost of prescription drugs;
- Rejects harmful changes to your health care that would impact reimbursement for pharmacies, protecting small pharmacies and essential services such as home delivery; and
- Preserves the right of spousal refusal during the Medicaid application process so you can care for yourself and your loved one.

Combating opiate abuse

Unfortunately, opiate abuse is on the rise in the North Country. To combat this devastating epidemic, the Assembly passed new laws to increase awareness and prevention efforts – including improved access to treatment programs – and strengthening state law to prevent the distribution of illegal drugs.

These measures are only the beginning of a difficult battle to overcome the heroin epidemic. It's vital that we protect our loved ones from the lethal effects of heroin and other dangerous drugs. If you or someone you know is struggling with addiction, please call the OASAS toll-free helpline at 1-877-8-HOPENY (1-877-846-7369); help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Find a farmers market near you

Alexandria Bay

Kinney Drugs parking area
Fridays, through Sept. 19
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Cape Vincent

Village Green, Broadway (Route 12)
Saturdays, through Oct. 11
8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Clayton

Village Park
Thursdays, through Sept. 11
10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Philadelphia

2 Main St.
Tuesdays, through Aug. 26
3 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Watertown

Dulles State Office Building
Washington St. & Sterling St.
Wednesdays, through Oct. 1
6:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Watertown Saturday Market

Pavilion at JB Wise Place
Saturdays, through Nov. 1
9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

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Reports to the people of the 116th Assembly District

Do you have a question or concern?

Assemblywoman Addie J. Russell
wants to hear from you.

You can contact us at either of our district offices, by email or telephone.

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