

More than 10,000 New Yorkers are on organ donation waiting lists as the need far exceeds supply. One person who donates organs (heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas and intestines) can save up to eight lives, while a tissue donor (corneas, bone, skin, heart valves, tendons, veins, etc.) can improve 12 or more lives by restoring eyesight, helping fight infections in burn patients, and preventing the loss of mobility and disability.

By enrolling in the Donate Life Registry, you are giving legal consent for the recovery of your organs, tissues and eyes for transplantation and research at the time of your death.



There are a variety of ways to enroll in the New York State Donate Life Registry:

- **Enroll online through the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) by creating a MyDMV account and/or at the Department of Health (DOH) at the NYS Donate Life Registry;**
- **Enroll at most DMV locations; and**
- **Enroll at the Board of Elections.**

Information provided by the New York State Department of Health.



2015
Session
Update

from

ASSEMBLYMAN

CLIFFORD W.
CROUCH



**Please look inside
for a special message
from Assemblyman
Cliff Crouch regarding
the 2015 Legislative
Session.**

Improving Education

Our children deserve a bright future and it starts with a quality education.

SCHOOL AID FOR UPSTATE SCHOOLS IN THE 122ND ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

2011 Total School Aid: \$19.7 billion

2015 Total School Aid: \$23.6 billion

Difference: School Aid Increase of \$3.9 billion or 20 percent.

In this year's state budget, I voted to stand up for our children and teachers against a hostile teacher evaluation program that was pushed by Governor Andrew Cuomo. I fought to reform Common Core and against its disastrous implementation. I firmly believe our teachers have the expertise and creativity to teach to each individual student and not to a cookie-cutter testing approach. In this year's state budget, a \$603 million restoration was included to help offset the Gap Elimination Adjustment, which has \$433 million remaining to be paid to school districts. In addition, our libraries received \$91.6 million, which is a \$5 million increase over last year.

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Higher Education

- Increased Community College base aid \$100 per student, for a total of \$2,597 per student;
- Maintained the maximum Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award at \$165 per student, for a total of \$5,165 per student;
- Started a new "Get on Your Feet Loan Forgiveness Program" and a new "New York State Achievement in Merit Scholarship," which will help high-achieving students based on need. Awards start at \$500 and are capped at \$5,000; and
- Approved \$50 million in additional funding for the new School of Pharmacy at Binghamton University.



A S S E M B L Y M A N

CLIFFORD W.
CROUCH

Property Tax Relief for Upstate Homeowners

In order to help struggling upstate homeowners, the Legislature extended the two percent property tax cap for another four years with the addition of a four-year, \$1.3 billion rebate relief program to complement the STAR and Enhanced STAR property tax exemption programs based on household income eligibility. Depending on the household income of taxpayers, this is essentially how the program will work:

In 2016, approximately 2.5 million homeowners who qualify for the state's School Tax Relief (STAR and enhanced STAR) program will receive a rebate check of \$185.

During the last three years of the program, the checks will be tied to a percentage of a homeowner's STAR savings, depending on household income. That percentage grows over the last three years of the program; thus, making the individual checks larger over time. Assuming income and STAR amount remain the same, those checks should grow from 2017 to 2019.

Agricultural Assistance for Local Farmers

As a former dairy farmer, I understand the hardships our local farmers face and understand that our local farms are the backbone and soul of our upstate economy. In this year's budget, we:

- Increased agriculture local assistance by \$4.2 million for a total of \$31 million;
- Created a Drain Tile Revolving Loan Fund Program to help farmers install irrigation drain tiles to relieve crops of stagnant water build-ups in fields;
- Appropriated a \$50 million Southern Tier Agriculture Industry Enhancement Program to help develop our local farm industry;
- Helped maple syrup producers comply with state regulations, protecting their legitimate businesses from unfair competition from imitation products and protecting consumers from buying lower quality products; and
- Emphasized assistance for new and beginning farmers by directing the state to make viable agricultural land available to new and beginning farmers.

New York State Assembly Committees

- > Agriculture
- > Economic Development, Job Creation, Commerce and Industry
- > Labor
- > Rules
- > Ways and Means

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Dear Neighbor,

Following the 2015 Legislative Session, I remain dedicated to working toward a bright future for you in the Southern Tier and for all New Yorkers.

With leadership changes and corruption plaguing our State Capitol, little legislative progress was made – which is no excuse – yet, we can claim a few small but significant victories for the Southern Tier: these advancements include **more progress toward phasing out the education cuts from 2011**, otherwise known as the Gap Elimination Adjustment; **a record increase in school aid for upstate school districts** in the 122nd Assembly District; **an extension of the property tax cap** with the addition of a rebate program to complement the STAR and Enhanced STAR property tax exemptions; **significant increases in agriculture assistance programs** for local farmers; and **state spending increases were kept under two percent**, to name a few. More details can be read in this bulletin.

Make no mistake; our state still faces many challenges. In order to address real property tax relief for overburdened homeowners, comprehensive state mandate relief measures must be passed to relieve the crushing tax burden that affects our taxpayers, businesses, schools and local governments. Without this relief, Upstate New York will continue to struggle under the state's ever-increasing tax pressures.

As always, if you have any questions regarding the material in this bulletin, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

