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# Assemblyman **David F. Gantt** *Reports to the People*



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## Gantt congratulates 2013 Black History Contest winners

I believe it is extremely important that students, when learning about the history of the United States, understand the histories of its entire people. With this understanding in mind, students must also be aware of the fact that many different heritages have found their home in the United States and that together we have a shared history. It is also important that students understand not only the facts and dates that make American history, but also how history has affected the lives of African-Americans.

Along with my staff, we congratulate Takhya Boose, Diamond Hamm, Keith Benjamin, and Jazmen Edmonds as our 2013 Black History Contest winners. Takhya Boose is a 4th grade student in Mrs. Austin's class at School #58 and she wrote about the life of poet Phillis Wheatley. Diamond Hamm is a 5th grader in Mrs. Manley's

class at School #43. Her essay focused on Harriet Tubman. Keith Benjamin, a 6th grader from School #16's Cowles/Starr class, did his essay on chemist and inventor Norbert Rillieux. Jazmen Edmonds is a 7th grader in Ms. Lum's class at Monroe High School. Her essay was dedicated to Black History itself.

We admire these students for their efforts in recognizing many of the influential leaders of the past and present. These students mirror the qualities of fortitude and consistency which define the essence of the Black experience in America. These students will undoubtedly be future leaders of their communities. Again, we salute you and congratulate your families for your efforts. Your shared and sustained commitment to Black History has unselfishly advanced the spirit of the African-American experience.



*Black History Essay Contest winners pictured from left to right: Jazmen Edmonds, Diamond Hamm, Keith Benjamin, and Takhya Boose (seated).*

## Gantt salutes the 2013 Boys & Girls Club Youth of the Year

This year's winner of the Boys & Girls Club Youth of the Year was awarded to Imari Clark of Rochester. Imari placed first out of all the youth in the region participating in the Youth of the Year competition.

Imari Clark, a member of the Club for 4 years, is a senior in high school and has been accepted to Oral Roberts University and is waiting for a response from University at Florida. She plans to study Biology and Communication in hopes of becoming a neonatal nurse.

"Imari embodies all of the characteristics that today's youth should represent. She is a hard worker, dedicated to education, and to servicing the community. She is very personable and friendly. We need more young women like her in our communities," Gantt said.

*Boys & Girls Club Youth of the Year, Imari Clark, (center) is pictured with Assemblyman David F. Gantt (right).*



## Gantt supports the passage of the START-UP NY legislation to bring new businesses and jobs

In an effort to bring more businesses and jobs to Rochester, Gantt and the Assembly passed a bill that will assist in the creation of the SUNY Tax-free Areas to Revitalize and Transform Upstate NY (START-UP NY) program (A.8113). This program will designate tax-free zones for eligible business near SUNY and CUNY campuses – as well as private colleges and universities – to foster job creation. In addition, the measure reduces burdensome regulations for businesses and enhances the Excelsior Jobs Program, which provides investment incentives to businesses in strategic industries such as manufacturing, high-tech, and clean energy.

***“With START-UP NY, we can help nurture successful partnerships between universities and private-sector businesses, which, in turn, will increase opportunities in Rochester, boost economic activity and provide better-paying jobs so we don’t continue losing bright, young talent.”***

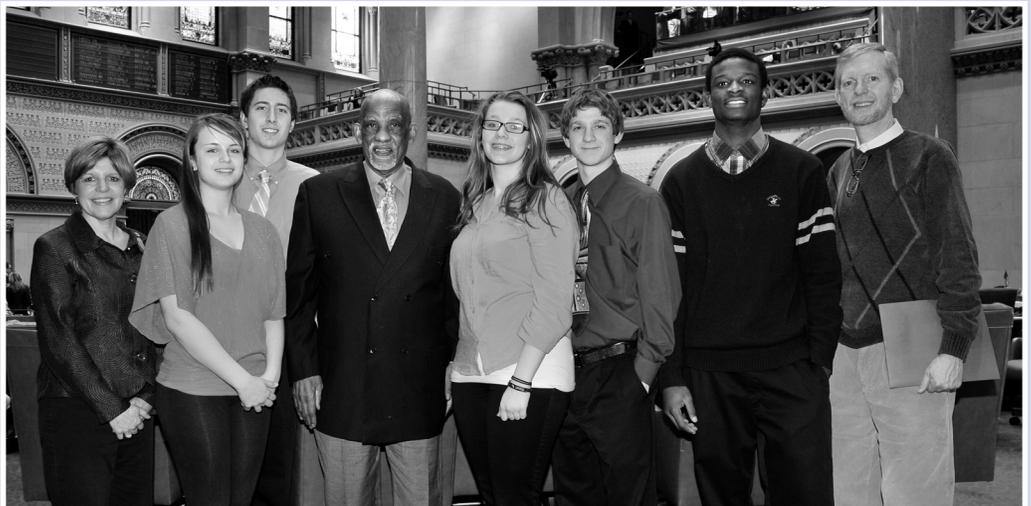
*– Assemblyman Gantt*

### The Assembly’s measure will also:

- give eligible businesses the opportunity to have all state taxes waived for 10 years;
- provide employees working in the qualifying business’ tax-free zone a waiver so they would not have to pay income taxes for 5 years and employees up to a certain income level would pay no income taxes for an additional 5 years;
- establish Minority – and Women – Owned Businesses and prevailing wage requirements for construction projects on state and public campus land;
- make sure local zoning rules apply to tax-free areas located on off-campus property;
- make sure the college consults with the municipality where land located off-campus is under consideration for a project;
- make contracts for projects on CUNY campuses comply with article 9 of the labor law (prevailing wage for service workers);
- allow for project labor agreements (PLA) to be used for projects at SUNY/CUNY and the 20 strategic sites; and
- make sure businesses comply with all applicable worker protection and environmental laws and regulations.

## Gantt welcomes Rochester School for the Deaf

On March 5th, a very talented group of students from the 4201 Schools Association - Rochester School for the Deaf visited the Capitol in Albany. The students did not simply meet and greet but acted as strong advocates on several important issues. “These students were beyond impressive,” Assemblyman Gantt said. “We could all learn a few lessons from the hard work and dedication they have demonstrated. I have no doubt that each of their futures will be very bright.”



*Pictured above: Nancy Heaney, Director of MS/HS Programs; Allison Higgins, 11th Grade Student; Christopher Mitchell, 11th Grade Student; Assemblyman David F. Gantt; Sarah Stanislow, 11th Grade Student; Ryan Clark-Sulkey, 11th Grade Student; Tim Artinian, 11th Grade Student; and former 4201 Chair & Superintendent of Rochester School for the Deaf, Dr. Harold Mowl.*

## Gantt supports legislation to increase the minimum wage



*Assemblyman David F. Gantt speaks during minimum wage debate.*

“Families living on inadequate minimum wage salaries are struggling to stay afloat as the cost of living continues to rise,” Gantt said. “It’s a matter of fairness and economic common sense. Increasing the minimum wage will help working families make ends meet, and a rise in their purchasing power will provide a much-needed boost for Rochester’s economy.”

Assemblyman Gantt and the Assembly passed a bill that will increase the minimum wage to \$9.00 per hour in January 2014 (A.38-A). The bill would also index the minimum wage to inflation beginning in 2015 – reflecting annual changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) – and set wages for food service workers who receive tips to \$6.21 per hour. The Assembly previously passed legislation to raise the minimum wage in New York from \$7.25 per hour to \$8.50

per hour and index it to the rate of inflation. President Obama then proposed increasing the federal minimum wage to \$9.00 per hour and indexing it to inflation. The Assembly amended its legislation to match the president’s plan.

From 2002 to 2012, the percent increase in CPI ranged from 1.6 percent to 3.8 percent annually. Over that time, gasoline prices rose 169 percent; education 72 percent; household energy costs 49 percent; medical care 45 percent; groceries 32 percent; and clothing 2 percent.

Gantt stated that every year the minimum wage doesn’t increase, minimum wage workers see the value of their labor decline. He also stated that indexing the minimum wage to inflation will take care of this once and for all and ensure Rochester families are fairly compensated for their hard work.

## Gantt's Summer Reading Challenge

# Dig Into READING



Just because school is out doesn't mean we have to stop learning. Studies have shown that children who continue to read during the summer perform better in school in the fall. To encourage our children to continue reading during the summer, I have set up a summer READING CHALLENGE.

I challenge students of all ages to read at least 10 books this summer. When you have read 10 books or more your child will earn a New York State Assembly Excellence in Reading Certificate. Just fill out the bottom of this form and return it to me with a list and summary of the books you have read and I'll see that your child receives a certificate.

A good source for reading material is the local public library. Thank you and Happy Reading!

### Summer Reading Challenge information form

Child's name ↴

School ↴

Grade ↴

Parent/Guardian Name ↴

Street Address ↴

City or Town ↴

Zip Code ↴

*Names of Books Read (Please attach summaries)*

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Return form to:

**Assemblyman David F. Gantt  
Summer Reading Challenge**

**74 University Avenue**

**Rochester, NY 14605**

**585-454-3670**

**585-454-3788 (FAX)**

## Gantt supports budget proposal that increases education funding, provides mandate relief, and creates jobs

Gantt and the Assembly passed a 2013-2014 state budget proposal that would increase education funding, spur job growth, provide mandate relief for local governments, and protect vital programs that help New York's most vulnerable citizens, while closing a \$1.35 billion budget gap (E.182). The Assembly budget proposal also would establish a significant reserve to help protect against future budget shortfalls.

*"I helped craft a sound and fiscally responsible budget that is consistent with the governor's proposal and makes key investments in the types of programs and services hard-working Rochester families rely on. Over the past three years we've had unprecedented spending control and fair, on-time budgets. We must continue to focus on passing state budgets that keep New York moving forward."*

– Assemblyman Gantt

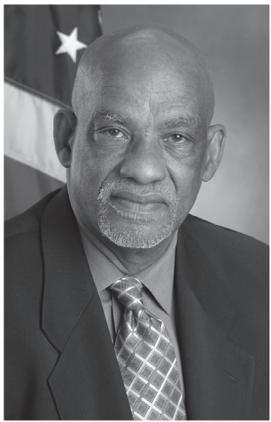
### The Assembly's budget proposal would:

- increase school aid to \$834 million – above last year's total – and an increase of \$334 million above the executive budget proposal;
- restore \$240 million in school aid for New York City schools cut by the executive because of the failure to approve teacher and principal evaluations;
- provide \$161 million in capital funding to create a new NYCUNY 2020 grant program;
- increase municipal assistance for cities, towns and villages by 11.2 percent and give \$140 million in Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) for New York City;
- provide \$100 million for new jobs initiative;
- include Unemployment Insurance (UI) reform to make UI fund solvent;
- reject the executive's recommendation to eliminate spousal refusal and restores \$34.3 million to Medicaid in support of this program; and
- restore \$120 million to not-for-profit organizations that work with individuals with developmental disabilities and an additional \$20 million to maintain state-operated mental health services.



## Dig Into READING

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For Details



Assemblyman  
**David F.  
Gantt**

**Reports to  
the People**

Summer 2013

## Gantt works to help the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities restore cuts

"Restoring the funding for these OPWDD services is vital and it's something I won't stop fighting for," Gantt said. That's why the Assembly passed a bill that would restore up to \$90 million to the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) to help nonprofits who work with some of New York's most vulnerable people (A.6692-C).

Gantt states that the state has acknowledged and is working to correct mistakes that have been made in the past and that there was no reason to penalize the developmentally disabled community, their families, and their caretakers. Due to a dispute with the federal government earlier this year, New York State was ordered to pay

back \$1.1 billion in "overpayments" for services to individuals with developmental disabilities. Fortunately, through negotiations with the federal government, the state was able to reduce that "claw back" by more than half to \$500 million and was allowed to spread out the burden so that OPWDD providers didn't carry that financial burden alone. This year's budget restored \$30 million of \$120 million in proposed cuts to OPWDD funding.

"We're approaching this problem head on because no one wants to see cuts in services," Gantt said. "Individuals with developmental disabilities and their families need these services – their quality of life literally depends on it."