

**SPRING
2018**

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- 2018-19 State Budget: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly
- Save a Life...or 8!
- Around Town with Mike



Dear Neighbors:

As spring arrives, we have finished the 2018-19 State Budget, and the second half of this year's legislative session is taking shape. While there are many things about the budget process that remain broken and that I am working to improve, we also have some successes to report. Learn more inside this newsletter.

There is still plenty of work to be done, and I am focused on the priorities of Western New York and making our state a safer, more affordable place to call home.

As always, I enjoy keeping you informed of our progress and encourage you to sign up for my e-newsletter or to follow me on social media for more timely updates about legislation and community events.

Serving you is the greatest honor of my life, and I am proudly fighting for you and the values of Western New York. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Working for you,

Michael J Norris

Want to learn more? E-mail Mike Norris at norrism@nyassembly.gov to sign up for his e-newsletter.

Contact Assemblyman Mike Norris:

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ASSEMBLYMAN
Mike NORRIS

PS: Recently, I had the pleasure to volunteer some time with Meals on Wheels for Western New York. This is a great program that is always in need of volunteers.

THE 2018-19 NYS BUDGET RECAP

Though this year's state budget was only my second experience as your new Assemblyman, I have already learned that every budget is a mixture of good, bad and ugly.

The Good

Though I ultimately opposed the majority of the budget, and especially the process by which it was produced, there were many positive outcomes of the budget that I fought hard to deliver on and am glad to support:

- The governor's proposed \$1 billion in increased taxes and fees were not included (although some new taxes were. See below);
- Significant increases in school aid;
- Restoration of the governor's proposed cuts in funding for local road and bridge maintenance, plus an additional \$65 million in Extreme Winter Recovery funds, and \$100 million for BRIDGE NY and \$100 million for PAVE NY;
- \$1 million more in funding for our libraries;
- A statewide workplace sexual harassment prevention policy;
- Extension of the "Hire-A-Vet" tax credit;
- \$300 million for the Environmental Protection Fund;
- Increased funding for direct care workers;
- Continued prioritization of ending the opioid epidemic with the creation of the "Opioid Stewardship Act;" and
- More money and funding flexibility for the Flood Recovery Program, a significant outcome for constituents living along Lake Ontario's southern shore.

The Bad

Despite these many wonderful and worthwhile initiatives, the majority of the state budget's money – funded by taxpayers like you – is going to programs that those of us in Western New York do not support and cannot afford. For example:

- One of the largest expenses in the budget is Medicaid. As an advocate of reforming this program, I cannot support more spending without reforms;
- Economic development was again a big expense to taxpayers in this budget, but my constituents and I want to know where are the jobs that have resulted from billions of hard-earned tax dollars being spent? With so many corruption charges and convictions related to the state's economic development programs, I urged for this budget to include serious reforms, such as my State Contracts Sunlight Act. I was encouraged that similar ideas were included in each house's



one-house budget, yet unfortunately for New York's taxpayers, the final budget did not include any reforms, transparency or accountability;

- Though we were successful in fending off the governor's \$1 billion in proposed new taxes and fees, there were some tax and fee hikes included in this budget, such as a new tax on energy and the Employer Compensation Expense Program (payroll tax); and
- While my colleagues and I were successful in staving off cuts to vital Western New York priorities, such as local road and municipal funding, there were no increases for these important programs included in this budget either.

The Ugly

The ugly truth of this budget is that it ignores the priorities of Western New York. Instead of focusing on ways to build up our entire state, this year's "four men in a room" again focused their priorities on new airports and train stations in New York City, including last minute measures to usurp local control, causing even some of my colleagues to express their outrage during the debate. Simply put, this process is broken.

- In addition to spending more than \$168 billion, the budget spends over an all funds total of 2.4 percent and comes close to our state's debt limit;
- There is no substantial tax relief for individuals or businesses;
- There is no broad-based mandate relief for local governments or schools to help reduce property taxes;
- There are no real reforms in terms of ethics, economic development, Medicaid spending or overall budget process; and
- The number one reason why every New Yorker should be angered by this budget is the archaic, secretive closed-door process by which it was produced. Bills were printed in the middle of the night without any due process or time for many lawmakers to read or understand the bills, and certainly no time for the proposals to be properly vetted and discussed with the public. Shamefully, the piecemeal process where votes are traded for last minute pork spending leaves the citizens of this state without a budget that encompasses the big picture and the big impact it will have for generations to come.



DONATE TO SAVE A LIFE...OR 8!

Did you know that one organ donor can save up to eight lives? With more than 120,000 people in our country waiting for organ transplants, and many more in need of tissue donations, I hope you will join me in becoming an organ donor today.

As your Assemblyman, I was pleased to support measures to make it easier for more New Yorkers to become donors – now you can sign up online or simply register when you update your driver's license. Even though all major religions support donation, our state is falling behind in donors – only 31 percent of New Yorkers have signed up compared to the national average of 56 percent. With another name added to the waiting list every 10 minutes, now is the time to sign up.

<https://donatelife.ny.gov/> or <https://dmv.ny.gov/more-info/register-become-organ-eye-or-tissue-donor>

Assemblyman Mike Norris

**SPRING 2018
Legislative Newsletter**

WORKING FOR US!



**ASSEMBLYMAN
Mike
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Assemblyman Mike Norris: Working for Us!

Learn more about Mike's accomplishments and legislative priorities inside!

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