

- ✓ 2023-24 Budget Update
- ✓ Christmas in July Toy Drive
- ✓ Around Town with Mike: Better Together



DEAR *Neighbors:*



This year's budget process was completely unacceptable, and the lack of transparency as three people (the governor, speaker of the Assembly, and Senate majority leader) from the same political party negotiated in a room behind closed doors was frustrating to citizens and legislators alike – and yet another example of how dysfunctional our state government has become.

I'd like to provide all of you some basic facts. With the 2023-24 Enacted State Budget, spending has risen \$64 billion over the past five years⁵ (all of which I have voted against) since the downstate-driven majorities have taken complete control of state government. This amount is more than the total overall budgets of 32 states. Our total state budget comes in close to \$230 billion, which is more than that of Florida (roughly \$117 billion) and Texas (\$150 billion) even though they have similar populations^{4,6}!

New York's overall tax climate is ranked 49th out of 50, last out of 50 states for excessive personal income taxes and 49th for property taxes¹. This amount of state spending, debt, and taxation is, quite frankly, reckless and unsustainable.

Sadly, New Yorkers know this and are leaving in droves. For the second year in a row, New York is number one in population loss. Around 180,000 residents left just last year – that's almost 431,000 people in a two-year period³. At the same time, tax-friendly states like Texas and Florida are gaining from our losses. Texas gained 471,000 new residents. Florida's population increased by 1.9%.

These are some of the reasons, along with growing crime, one-in-four New Yorkers want to move out

of state, according to a Siena College Research Institute poll from April. Further, 27% of those polled plan to leave within five years, and another 31% plan to retire out of state².

In this newsletter, you can learn more about my efforts to fight for a budget that prioritizes a back-to-basics plan focusing on workforce development, infrastructure, and education, and seeks to eliminate wasteful and duplicate spending. Please know I will continue opposing a reckless spending train that will eventually drive New York right off the cliff.

Additionally, you can learn about our Christmas in July Toy Drive to benefit children with cancer and other very serious illnesses at the John Oishei Children's Hospital. Our community is always so generous, and I know you will continue to be so for this very worthwhile cause. The drive is going on now, and you can shop the childrens' online gift registry or drop off new, unopened gifts at any of our participating community locations or at my office.

As always, it is my honor and pleasure to serve you and our community. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance to you. For more timely updates, please sign up for my e-newsletter by emailing me at norrism@nyassembly.gov or follow me on social media.

Working for you,

Michael J. Norris

1. https://statetaxindex.org/state/new-york/?__hstc=254296215.ee4975e585097f5b99332ea3b76d71ec.1683560583916.1683660687932.1685455714877.4&__hssc=254296215.1.1685455714877&__hsfp=931873953
 2. <https://scri.siena.edu/2023/04/12/70-happy-they-live-in-ny-30-wish-they-lived-somewhere-else/>



NORRIS VOTES NO ON 5TH STATE BUDGET IN A ROW

New York state is ranked second worst in the nation for business climate – and worse, now we’re being ranked No. 1 in population loss too³. There have been warning signs for some time as more than ten years ago Western New York was just ahead of New Orleans in terms of worst metro areas to do business.

Most reasonable people would recognize there is a serious problem here and we must make systematic changes to improve our business climate by reducing our tax burden, cutting back burdensome regulations, and making proper investments in our infrastructure to rebuild.

Unfortunately, the downstate-driven majorities who control state government continue to put their heads in the sand and just hope that spending billions of dollars will make this crisis disappear. Coming in at a record \$229 billion, this bloated budget is simply too expensive for hardworking New York families, business owners, and farmers to afford⁴. Under one-party rule, in the last five years alone, state spending has increased by \$64 billion⁵. To put that in perspective, this increase is more than 35 state budgets in our union⁶. States like Florida, South Carolina, and Tennessee are not only offering lower tax rates and lower energy costs, but they also offer better incentives to do business and build a home and that is why we are seeing thousands of New Yorkers leaving for these areas¹.

To make matters even worse, this state budget was filled with major policies that will hurt our economy even more. It raises the minimum wage, which places our business owners at a competitive disadvantage. It raises taxes by another \$562 million⁴. And it restricts the use of natural gas, which threatens jobs in industries like manufacturing, construction, and transportation, and it bans its use on new construction builds starting in 2025.

On top of all this, the budget was held up for more than a month so bail reform could be negotiated, and after listening to the debate on this topic, it became quite clear these minor language tweaks are simply window dressing and will do little to improve public safety in our communities. Because 47% of employers in our region consider themselves pessimistic about a future in New York, something needs to be done – and that’s why I remain focused on promoting investments in our infrastructure, workforce development, and public protection⁷. Though these are drops in the overall budget bucket, I would like to update you on some of the silver linings in this dark cloud:

- ✓ **As the new ranking member of the Transportation Committee, I advocated hard for local infrastructure funding, and I am pleased to report a \$60 million increase in funding for the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS), which will support our roads, bridges, and culverts⁴;**
- ✓ **I’ve also advocated for proper library funding, and this budget includes a restoration of \$34 million for our library construction aid⁴;**
- ✓ **As the co-chair of the Assembly Minority Task Force on Learning for Work, I’ve fought passionately for workforce development initiatives like expanding P-TECH and providing more support for BOCES, and both items were enhanced in this budget⁴;**
- ✓ **The budget contains \$6.5 million in new funding for training stipends to be paid to volunteer firefighters for the completion of firefighter training⁴; and**
- ✓ **A new First-Time Homebuyer Program and expansion of the Child Care Tax Credit will also help Western New York families afford to stay and live here⁴.**

When we talk about state spending, I’ve rallied for a “back-to-basics” approach. These are some of the back-to-basics proposals I’ve advocated for that I was pleased to see. But these are modest funding appropriations when you consider the billions in excess spending that goes primarily downstate and is largely unaccounted for. Businesses and households all across our state, but especially in Western New York, have been tightening their belts for years – it’s time Albany starts doing the same. That’s why I voted “no” on the overall state budget for the fifth year in a row⁵. The state must refocus itself, get back to funding basic priorities, and rein in its excess spending as the current approach is not working and driving folks right out of here.

To learn more about this or any state issue, please contact Assemblyman Mike Norris: 8180 Main Street, Clarence, NY 14221 - (716) 839-4691 - norrism@nyassembly.gov

3. <https://www.timesunion.com/state/article/New-York-continues-to-lead-nation-in-population-17674233.php>

4. 2023-24 State Budget

5. State Budgets 2018-2023.

6. <https://www.nasbo.org/reports-data/summaries-proposed-enacted>

7. https://buffalonews.com/business/local/wny-ceos-feeling-blue-about-business-conditions/article_b874f23a-d360-11ed-b1fa-cb09d3398e46.html

CHRISTMAS IN JULY

I am so thankful to everyone in our community who donated toys to my first annual Christmas in July Toy Drive to benefit children at John Oishei Children's Hospital. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to put this heartwarming program on hold, but I am thrilled to share we have relaunched the program and it is going on now through July 25!

Please join me, the staff at Oishei Children's Hospital, and a special guest from the North Pole (pictured below) in improving the quality of life for the remarkable kids in treatment by donating brand new, in original packaging, toys, crafts, and activity sets. Infant and teen items are in particularly high demand.

You can donate directly through their online gift registry by scanning the QR code below or pick up an item when you are at our local Mom and Pop Shops around town. **You can drop off your donations at the following partnering locations:**

LOCKPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY

23 East Ave.
Lockport, NY 14094
(716) 433-5935
Monday-Thursday: 9AM-8PM
Friday: 9AM-5PM
Saturday: 10AM-5PM

CLARENCE TOWN LIBRARY

3 Town Pl.
Clarence, NY 14031
(716) 741-2650
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday:
10AM-9PM
Wednesday: 10AM-5PM
Friday, Saturday: 10AM-5PM

WILSON LIBRARY

265 Young St.
Wilson, NY 14172
(716) 751-6070
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday:
10AM-8PM
Wednesday: 2PM-8PM
Friday: 10AM-5PM
Saturday: 10AM-1PM

NEWFANE LIBRARY

2761 Maple Ave.
Newfane, NY 14108
(716) 778-9344
Monday-Friday: 10AM-6PM
Saturday: 10AM-2PM

ASSEMBLYMAN MIKE NORRIS' DISTRICT OFFICE

8180 Main Street
Clarence, NY 14221
(716) 839-4691
Monday-Friday: 9AM-5PM

Thank you

**ALL SO MUCH FOR
YOUR GENEROSITY
AND SUPPORT OF
THESE AMAZING
KIDS AND THEIR
FAMILIES.**

SCAN HERE TO
DONATE ONLINE



AROUND TOWN

With Mike!

BETTER TOGETHER

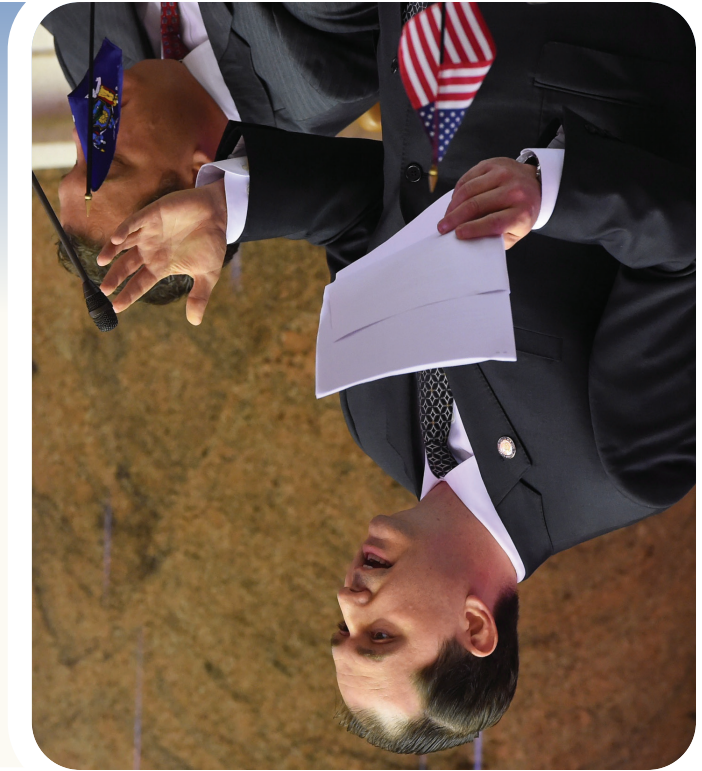


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**ASSEMBLYMAN
MIKE NORRIS**

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MIKE NORRIS

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LEARN MORE INSIDE!



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