



Assemblymember
Robert C. Carroll
Assembly District 44

April 8, 2021

Greetings --

This week, the Legislature passed a \$212 billion budget for the 2021-22 Fiscal Year, an increase of \$18.7 billion over last year, representing an unprecedented level of investment in New York. This budget ensures that our schools are fully funded, renters and homeowners see direct aid for overdue bills, that undocumented immigrant workers become eligible for economic relief, and that New York's small businesses and cultural institutions bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic through billions of dollars of investment. All of this has been made possible by coupling billions of dollars of emergency relief from the Biden administration and by raising taxes on corporations and individuals making over \$1 million in income.

Education and Child Care

The budget includes \$19.8 billion in Foundation Aid for our public schools, an increase of \$1.4 billion over last year's budget, and a commitment to fully fund the Foundation Aid formula over the next three years. This investment level, thanks in part to \$12 billion in federal funding, will help students get back to school and back on track after more than a year of remote and blended learning.

Additionally, the budget allocates \$2.4 billion in federal child care aid to needy families as well as grants to childcare providers to expand access to their services.

Investing in SUNY and CUNY

The budget includes \$13.7 billion to fund higher education, ensuring that SUNY and CUNY are not forced to raise their tuition. The budget also includes \$20 million to provide scholarships for non-tuition related expenses such as housing and textbooks.

The budget increases the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award from \$5,165 to \$5,665. This is a meaningful step in closing the gap between what TAP can offer students and the total cost of tuition for SUNY and CUNY. The budget also allotted \$100 million for SUNY and \$100 million for CUNY to fund expansion projects on their respective campuses.

Rent and Mortgage Relief

The budget provides over \$3 billion in combined federal and state aid for tenant and homeowner relief. The rental and mortgage relief program includes:

- \$2.3 billion in federal funding for Emergency Rental Assistance to aid eligible renters with rental arrears, utility and home energy costs or arrears, and future rent
- \$100 million for a hardship fund for those who cannot access funds from the Emergency Rental Assistance Program
- \$100 million to reduce homelessness
- \$575 million in federal aid for mortgage assistance, including a three year, \$60 million commitment to fund the Homeowner Protection Program (HOPP) to provide legal assistance to homeowners facing foreclosure

The budget includes language to expedite these programs, so New Yorkers are provided with the rental and mortgage relief they need.

The budget also grants \$325 million in capital funding to housing authorities across New York State, including \$200 million for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA).

Supporting Small Businesses, Arts and Culture

The COVID-19 pandemic devastated our small businesses and cultural institutions. As a state, If we do not revive these businesses and institutions New York's recovery will lag for years to come. The Small business and cultural institution aid includes:

- \$800 million to a Small Business Recovery Grant Program
- \$100 million to a musical and theater production tax credit
- \$35 million tax credit for restaurants affected by COVID-19
- \$50 million for the COVID-19 Recovery Workplace Initiative

The budget also includes a total of \$84.1 million in support for the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), including \$40 million for a new *Arts Recovery Grant Program* to assist with reopening efforts of various not for profit arts organizations and to provide financial support for the conversion of outdoor venue spaces.

The Excluded Workers Fund

The budget allocates \$2.1 billion to an excluded workers fund, to provide one-time unemployment benefits to immigrant workers who were not able to receive unemployment benefits and other government assistance due to their immigration status.

Environment

The budget includes the \$3 billion Restore Mother Nature Environmental Bond Act. New York voters will be asked to approve the bond act in November 2022. If they do, the money will be invested in climate change mitigation projects and resiliency infrastructure projects.

The budget also allocated \$500 million for clean water infrastructure projects and \$300 million for the Environmental Protection Fund. The Environmental Protection Fund provides funding to farmland protection, zoos, gardens, parks and charging stations for electric vehicles.

The budget also ensured that New York City's [Local Law 97](#) remained intact. LL 97 is one of the state's most important pieces of climate legislation. This law requires buildings to reduce their emissions in stages in order to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050. I'm proud to have been a leader in the Assembly to protect LL 97, so that New York can better stay on track to meet the goals in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act of 2019.

Veteran Support

The budget provides \$5 million for the Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Support Project, a program that works with veterans who are struggling with the challenges of post traumatic stress disorder and other behavioral issues. The budget also includes \$4.2 million for state-wide programs to support veterans. This includes programs that provide legal assistance, mental health resources and employment assistance to veterans across the state.

Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has put incredible stress on our healthcare system, and demonstrated just how important it is that New Yorker's have quality, affordable healthcare. The budget includes \$193.8 million for health care services and systems throughout New York. It provides \$542 million in restorations to the Medicaid program, including \$204.4 million for hospitals and \$51.75 million for the Managed Long Term Care (MLTC) Quality Pool. It also utilizes additional federal funding to increase funding for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) by \$500 million and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by \$80 million.

The budget will award additional contracts to fiscal intermediaries in the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP) that serves communities with disabilities and minority populations, as well as ensure appropriate geographic disbursement in counties that meet certain population thresholds.

Revenue Increases

The budget contains measures to require top earning individuals and large companies to pay their fair share, generating an estimated \$7.8 billion over the next two years by:

- Increasing the tax rate for individuals earning \$1 million a year and couples earning \$2 million
- Creating new tax brackets for New Yorkers earning \$5 million to \$25 million a year and New Yorkers earning more than \$25 million a year

- Increasing the corporate tax rate for corporate franchise taxpayers with incomes higher than \$5 million from 6.5% to 7.25%

Important Items outside of the Budget

In the last few weeks the legislature has passed two important pieces of legislation. The first being the HALT Solitary Confinement Act ([A.2277-A](#)), which limits the length of time an incarcerated person can be kept in solitary confinement to 15 consecutive days or 20 days in a 60 day period. This law brings New York's prison system into compliance with global human rights standards. [See my remarks on the bill here.](#)

Second, the Legislature passed the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA), which legalizes adult use marijuana for New Yorkers 21 years of age and older ([A.1248-C](#)). Further, this law will give New Yorkers in communities disproportionately impacted by the war on drugs new entrepreneurial and job growth opportunities. [See my remarks on the bill here.](#)

If you have questions about other budget items or any other legislative matter, please email me at Carrollr@nyassembly.gov or call the district office at 718 788 7221

Stay Safe,

Bobby

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