



April 15, 2022

Greetings,

Earlier this week the Legislature passed a \$221 billion budget for New York State's 2022-23 Fiscal Year. This is the largest budget in State history, reflecting the need to bring relief to New Yorkers still struggling from the impacts of the pandemic while making very significant investments in our future. I especially want to highlight the following actions and commitments:

EDUCATION

- \$31.2 billion in total school aid funding, an increase of \$2.1 billion, or 7% over last year, and \$120 million over the Executive Budget proposal
- A \$1.5 billion increase in Foundation Aid, fully phasing it in by the 2023-24 school year ensuring that funds go to schools that need it most.
- Significant new funding for SUNY and CUNY, especially with regards to tuition assistance
- A \$3.5 million increase in aid for public libraries over the executive budget for a total of \$99.6 million – a \$5.5 million increase over last year

ENVIRONMENT

- \$4.2 billion to the Environmental Bond Act of 2022, which will be on the ballot for voter approval in November and includes:
 - \$1.5 billion for climate mitigation
 - \$1.1 billion for restoration and flood risk reduction
 - \$650 million for open space conservation and recreation
 - \$650 million for water quality projects
 - \$400 million for the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), an increase of \$100 million over last year's state budget

HOUSING

- \$1.1 billion in funding for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) and the Landlord Rental Assistance Program (LRAP), including \$150 million in federal funding;
- \$250 million for a utility arrears program
- \$350 million for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)

- An additional \$15 million for the Homeowner Protection Program (HOPP) for a total of \$35 million.

CHILDCARE

- \$3 billion more in childcare funding over the next three years alone, expanding eligibility for subsidized care from 200% of the federal poverty level to 300% (\$55,000 to \$83,250 for a family four)

HEALTHCARE

- Increases the home care worker minimum wage by \$3, from \$15 to \$18 per hour over a two-year period. While this is not the increase I and my Assembly colleagues had called for it is a modest step in recognition of the vital role these workers play in so many of our lives and the extra challenges they have faced throughout the pandemic.
- Expands health care coverage for undocumented immigrants for one year of postpartum coverage following the end of pregnancy (pregnant women are already covered), and provides Medicaid coverage for undocumented seniors aged 65 and older

TRANSPORTATION

- \$6.17 billion for Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) transit assistance, an increase of \$993 million – or 19.2% – over last year’s budget preventing a fare increase on buses and subways this year
- \$20 million for the third installment of a five-year, \$100 million program for electric transit buses
- \$23 million additional funds to New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to fund, among other initiatives, the Charge NY Program, which aims to get more electric cars and trucks on the road

ARTS FUNDING

- \$50 million for the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) to provide pandemic relief, \$10 million of which is through regional arts councils
- \$1 million for arts stabilization grants
- \$750,000 for grants to arts organizations

FOOD INSECURITY

- \$50 million for the Nourish NY program, a farm to table initiative to combat food insecurity

SMALL BUSINESSES

- \$250 million to create a refundable tax credit program to help small businesses cover COVID-19-related expenses, offering a minimum credit of \$1,000 per business

- Restoring the sale of alcoholic beverages "to go" from restaurants and bars for off-premises consumption. The new policy addresses the concerns of small businesses operating liquor stores by requiring food orders, sealed containers, and no bottle sales.

As you can see from these highlights there is much that is worthy in the budget, but there is also no question that the Governor did not follow best practices when it comes to transparency and inclusiveness in the budget process. Particularly egregious was the attempt to make significant changes to criminal justice legislation relating to bail and discovery with no evidence that these changes would increase public safety. The legislature blocked some but not all these changes and hopefully we can have a more evidence-based process going forward.

The Governor's insistence on the massive \$850 million public subsidy to build a new Buffalo Bills stadium can only be described as a boondoggle. I know how much the Bills mean to western New York, but this kind of giveaway of public funds should not occur without more deliberation and some guarantees that New Yorkers will receive real value for their money.

Despite these issues, I believe the good in this budget outweighs the bad. I look forward to continuing to work to see that our resources are used wisely and in ways that truly promote the common good. And of course, if you have questions or concerns about the budget or any other legislative matter please email me at carrollr@nyassembly.gov or call the district office at (718) 788-7221.

On Wednesday I joined a number of community leaders and groups across my district to break the fast for a delicious Iftar dinner at Jalsa Restaurant on Coney Island Avenue.



I hope that all who celebrate have a safe and restful Passover, Easter, and Ramadan.

-Bobby

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