



COMMUNITY NEWS

from Assemblyman

J. GARY PRETLOW

89th Assembly District



MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

The Assembly Majority believes that no individual working full-time should be enduring poverty or facing challenges in providing food for their families. Efforts were made to ensure that New Yorkers receive fair compensation, including an increase in the minimum wage. This adjustment ensures that individuals are not left behind by inflation in the future. As of January 1, the minimum wage rises to \$16 per hour in New York City and certain counties, and to \$15 per hour in other parts of the state. This marks the first of three planned increases before tying the minimum wage to inflation. Elevating the minimum wage serves as an investment benefiting all hardworking individuals and contributes to economic growth. Our ongoing commitment is to continue making our state a more affordable place for families to reside and thrive.



CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM GET CRITICAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The approved budget for the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2024-25 allocates essential funding towards programs aimed at supporting individuals within the criminal justice system who have been diagnosed with mental illness, ensuring they receive necessary care and services. This budget includes \$31.1 million designated for initiatives facilitating access to critical mental health services for such individuals. These programs comprise: \$14.6 million allocated for Intensive Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) Teams; \$8.2 million earmarked for Court-Based Mental Health Navigators; \$4.3 million designated for Transitional Housing for Individuals Referred Through the Court System; \$2.8 million reserved for Specialized Housing for People with Severe Mental Illness (SMI) and a Criminal History; \$1 million directed towards Law Enforcement and Mental Health Coordination Teams; and \$187,000 set aside for Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training for Law Enforcement.

2024 has been filled with hope, aspirations, and resolution so far, I extend my warmest greetings to each and every one of you. It is with great honor and dedication that I continue to serve as your representative in the New York State Assembly. As we reflect on what we accomplished this session, my colleagues and I are committed to continue making New York State an even better place for all its residents. We were able to pass the state budget this year by prioritizing key sectors such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and small business support, we aim to foster sustainable growth, create job opportunities, and enhance the overall well-being of our communities. Together, let us work tirelessly to build a brighter and more prosperous future for New York State.

I am pleased to deliver information critical to the 89th Assembly District. Thank you in advance for taking the time to read through this newsletter, and please know that my staff and I are always available to assist you with any questions or concerns you may have.

Education



The SFY 2024-25 Budget allocates a substantial \$20.7 billion investment in higher education, with \$1.3 billion designated for the State University of New York (SUNY), \$858 million for the City University of New York (CUNY), and an additional \$3 million for opportunity programs compared to the previous year.

Moreover, the plan raises the minimum Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award from \$500 to \$1,000 and extends part-time TAP eligibility to proprietary college students.

In addition to higher education, the budget prioritizes funding for classrooms, providing \$35.9 billion in support to General Support for Public Schools (GSPS). The budget also reinstates the “Hold Harmless” provision within Foundation Aid, safeguarding school districts from funding cuts and instead allocating \$24.9 billion in Foundation Aid, marking a \$934.5 million increase from the previous school year.

Furthermore, the Assembly continues its commitment to equitable education by allocating \$28 million in ongoing funding to the My Brother’s Keeper Programs (MBK), bringing the total funding for the program to \$172 million since its inception.

Prioritizing Support for Families and Affordability in New York

The budget allocates \$350 million to alleviate the tax burden on families through the Supplemental Empire State Child Credit. The legislature has approved a 1.7 percent salary increase in addition to a proposed 1.5 percent cost of living adjustment (COLA) for support staff, clinical staff, and non-executive administrative staff across Human Services agencies.



This encompasses entities such as the Office of Mental Health (OMH), Office of Addiction Service and Supports (OASAS), Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), State Office for the Aging, as well as foster care providers and adoptive parents.

The budget includes \$150 million for the establishment of the New York Housing for the Future Program. This initiative aims to create a statewide limited equity cooperative program, offering affordable homeownership and rental opportunities to low and middle-income families. It will facilitate housing development on state and municipally owned sites, as well as properties owned by not-for-profit corporations and Community Land Trusts.

The budget earmarks \$140 million for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), \$80 million for the Mitchell Lama program, and \$75 million for public housing authorities outside of New York City.

Crucial Healthcare Funding



The approved State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2024-25 Budget prioritizes healthcare services with significant investments. This includes allocating \$800 million to financially distressed and safety-net hospitals and \$350 million for hospital rate increases. Furthermore, the budget empowers the Department of Health to seek a federal waiver to implement an assessment on Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). This assessment aims to generate funds for capital healthcare projects and expand Medicaid coverage.

The budget includes forgiveness of the State University of New York (SUNY) hospitals' debt service payment for SFY 2024-25, resulting in

savings of \$79.1 million. Moreover, the \$100 million allocated for SUNY Downstate is adjusted to no longer require adherence to a transformation plan.

The budget opposes proposed reductions in worker wages and ensures full maintenance of wages for home care aides engaged in Medicaid-reimbursed work. It also transitions the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP) to a single fiscal intermediary, enhancing program oversight and emphasizing individualized care.

Tenant and Homeowner Protections

The budget introduces safeguards for homeowners, including measures against residential and commercial deed theft. It explicitly states in state law that a squatter is an individual with whom a landlord-tenant relationship does not exist.

The Assembly Majority, known for its advocacy for tenant protections, has included in this plan new measures to safeguard tenants. These include prohibiting the eviction or refusal to renew a lease without good cause within New York City and, by local option, in the rest of the state. Good cause for eviction encompasses nonpayment of rent, illegal activities, recovery for personal use, and nuisance. Additionally, tenants can cite an unreasonable rent increase as a defense during a non-payment eviction proceeding if the rent hike exceeds the lower of five percent plus the change in the consumer price index or 10 percent.



89TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS



CLIP AND RETURN



Your questions or comments are important to me. If you have any concerns or issues you would like to discuss with me, please indicate and return to:

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2024

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