



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lee M. Zeldin

## 4th CONSECUTIVE ON-TIME BALANCED STATE BUDGET PASSED

LEE M. ZELDIN March 31, 2014

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### **4<sup>th</sup> CONSECUTIVE ON-TIME BALANCED STATE BUDGET PASSED**

ALBANY—Senator Lee Zeldin (R,C,I—Shirley) today commented on the passage of the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive on-time balanced budget, noting the inclusion of several key initiatives for which he championed.

“Today, we were able to pass an on-time, fiscally responsible budget that holds the line on spending, provides relief to NY taxpayers, paves the way for job creation, provides an important fix to the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA), expands the PFC Joseph Dwyer Program for veterans with PTSD and protects critical funding for our seniors,” said Senator

Zeldin. “I am incredibly proud of what we were able to accomplish this year.”

Some of the most important tax relief and job creation initiatives include:

- \$1.5 billion in new property tax relief over three years, from which, as many as 2.8 million property taxpayers could receive direct property tax rebates;
- Elimination of the corporate tax on manufacturers this year;
- Acceleration of the elimination of the job-killing 18-a energy tax surcharge to save all businesses and residential ratepayers \$600 million over the next three years;
- Increase of the estate tax exemption over the next five years from \$1 million to match the federal exemption of \$5 million, which will help maintain family-owned businesses;
- Creation of a real property tax credit of 20 percent for manufacturers that lease or own property.

In the same vein, Senator Zeldin successfully fought to ensure that no state money in this year’s budget was used to fund the deeply flawed Affordable Care Act.

This year’s state budget also increases school aid to Long Island schools by \$125.7 million. As a result, every school district in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Senate District will receive an increase.

This year’s state budget also restores \$600 million of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA)—a restoration that is 86% larger than the one originally proposed by the Governor and seven times larger than what was proposed by the Assembly.

“Throughout this process, I have heard from countless constituents who voiced their concern about the need to improve the Governor’s Executive Budget proposal for school aid,” said Senator Zeldin. “This GEA restoration and overall school aid increase are huge wins for

both our local schools and the taxpayers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Senate District.”

This year’s budget was particularly sensitive to the needs of New York’s senior citizens. It expands the number of seniors eligible for the EPIC prescription drug program by increasing the income eligibility limits by \$40,000 for individuals and by \$50,000 for married enrollees.

Senator Zeldin continued, “Our seniors are the backbone of our communities and they should be recognized and prioritized as such. I am especially proud of the budget decisions for seniors this year.”

This year’s budget also builds on the success of one of Senator Zeldin’s most significant achievements by providing for the continuation and expansion of the PFC Joseph Dwyer PTSD Peer-to-Peer Veterans Support program.

Monroe County was added to the list of counties served, which also includes Suffolk, Nassau, Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Orange, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Jefferson, and Onondaga. Senator Zeldin originally created this program for Suffolk and three other counties in the 2012-2013 state budget.

“The Dwyer Program is a budget victory I am especially proud of,” said Senator Zeldin, who still serves as a Major in the Army Reserves. “It has proven to be incredibly successful in my home county of Suffolk, where we have conducted almost 150 group sessions since the program began. Countless veterans have been reached since the program’s expansion last year and by continuing its funding, we are ensuring that our veterans are receiving the high quality support they deserve after volunteering to potentially sacrifice their lives to protect our Constitution, freedoms and liberties.”

Senator Zeldin was also successful in securing \$75,000 in Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) funding for the Village of Mastic Beach, a piece that was eliminated in

the Governor's original proposal.

"In a relatively new village like Mastic Beach, \$75,000 can go a long way toward improving the community," said Senator Zeldin. "The Governor's initial budget proposal would have eliminated this critical funding, but securing this money for the village remained high on my list of priorities. It is an important victory for the village community."

Senator Zeldin concluded by saying, "Passing this budget, on-time and in a truly bi-partisan way, is just another example of New York's government working. As we move forward in this legislative session, I will continue to fight on behalf of my constituents in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Senate District."