



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
James L. Seward

Senate Call To End GEA Intensifies

JAMES L. SEWARD February 10, 2015

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ALBANY, 02/10/15 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I- Oneonta) today announced that the Senate Majority conference is joining his fight to eliminate the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) which has devastated public schools.

“I recently introduced legislation to eliminate the Gap Elimination Adjustment, and today, joined my colleagues to further advocate for the end of the GEA by providing necessary funding in the 2015-16 state budget,” said Senator Seward. **“To know that this issue is a top priority of the Senate Majority conference confirms how important it is to every school, every student, and every property taxpayer in New York State.”**

Senator Seward voted against the GEA when it was passed in 2009 and has spearheaded efforts to restore funding in recent state budgets. His legislation (S.2643) would eliminate the GEA entirely

Since it was first approved, senate Republicans have been leading the charge to abolish the GEA and deliver major funding increases to help mitigate its impact on education. The GEA cuts have been reduced by 62 percent – from a high of \$2.6 billion in the 2011-2012 budget to \$1 billion in the 2014-15 budget – to help restore billions of dollars in state aid to schools.

Last year alone, the senate Republicans successfully negotiated an additional \$602 million – 86 percent more than the governor proposed and nearly seven times more than what the assembly proposed – to help schools overcome the GEA challenge created by Democrats. That funding represented a major step towards lessening the GEA's burden on school budgets, but there is still more than \$1 billion in GEA budget cuts anticipated for the upcoming fiscal year.

The governor has proposed an overall \$1.1 billion increase in education funding over last year. However, that increase was not specifically tied to the elimination of the \$1 billion needed for this year's GEA.

The Senate Majority is currently preparing its own budget proposal which will include revenue estimates for the next fiscal year, reviews of all new initiatives, and sources of funding that can be found within the governor's proposal. The conference will be proposing a budget that uses the majority of the \$1.1 billion increase proposed in the governor's budget – up to \$600 million – and is working to identify the sources for the additional \$300-\$400 million needed this fiscal year to eliminate the GEA once and for all.

“Ending the GEA will alleviate a major funding roadblock for local schools. This will mean more resources for classroom instruction and quality programs – that is what our students deserve and need so they can be ready for the next stage in their lives,” Seward concluded.