



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew Gounardes

## Sen. Gounardes: This Year's Budget Includes Wins for Students, Tenants, Patients, Small Business Owners and All Who Use New York's Streets

ANDREW GOUNARDES April 20, 2024

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*New York State Senator Andrew Gounardes released the following statement today after the Senate voted to approve a final FY2025 state budget:*

“Each year, I fight hard to pass a state budget that meets the needs of New Yorkers and puts us on a path towards a state that is safer, fairer and more affordable for working families. While this year’s budget isn’t perfect, it includes several crucial wins for students, tenants,

patients, small business owners and all who use New York's streets.

"Our budget recognizes that New York's universities are powerful economic engines that lift students into the middle class. That's why it includes my proposal to ensure universal FAFSA access to all students, and increases the minimum Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award from \$500 to \$1,000, the first increase since 2000. We also secured a \$60 million increase in operating aid for SUNY and a \$40 million increase for CUNY. We can do even more to create opportunity for New Yorkers by passing my [New Deal for CUNY](#) and my proposal to [ban unfair legacy admissions](#) preferences.

"The budget includes historic measures to address New York's dire housing crisis, including incentives to build more affordable housing alongside strengthened protections for tenants. I'm particularly proud that we've taken steps to break the unfair status quo by extending 'good cause' protections to countless tenants in unregulated apartments who can now stay in their homes and their communities without fear of unfair eviction. But we need to do more to both protect renters and build new housing, including by passing my [Faith-Based Affordable Housing Act](#).

"We fought hard in this budget to meet New Yorkers' health needs, including by eliminating cost-sharing for insulin so it remains affordable and accessible to all who need it, and by preventing the closure of SUNY Downstate, ensuring it continues to serve Brooklynites with long-term health equity in mind.

"We invested in our small businesses—the lifeblood of our economy—by providing funding for programs to prevent retail theft, and by giving local and state government much more power to quickly shut down illegal cannabis shops so that New Yorkers are safe and licensed businesses that follow the rules have a fair shot.

“The budget includes a new supplemental tax credit for families eligible for the Empire State Child Tax Credit, which provides direct support to working families. This is a step in the right direction, but we can go much further to fix our unfair tax system, permanently cut child poverty and help families make ends meet by passing [my Working Families Tax Credit](#).

“This budget ensures New York remains a global hub for technology by creating Empire AI, a major new initiative to research ethical and public interest uses of artificial intelligence. At the same time, it safeguards our privacy and our democracy by banning non-consensual AI deep fakes and expanding protections against sexually explicit AI-content. We can do even more to ensure tech truly serves New Yorkers—and not the other way around—by passing [my legislation to protect children on social media](#).

“This budget makes New York’s streets safer for everyone by including the long-overdue Sammy’s Law, which gives New York City permission to set its own speed limits, and by enacting toll evasion reforms that allow the State’s to enforce against drivers who intentionally evade tolls or continuously fail to pay their bills. I’ll keep fighting to ensure our streets are safe for everyone with [my proposals](#) to expand red-light cameras, slow down serial speeders, and crack down on license plate fraud.

“Finally, I’m proud that this budget includes \$30 million for AAPI Equity Budget Coalition priorities, which will fund crisis intervention initiatives, local organizations and community-based programs to combat bias crimes to ensure true public safety for all.”

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