



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeremy Cooney

## Senator Cooney Reacts to Governor Hochul's State of the State Address

JEREMY COONEY January 14, 2025

| ISSUE: **GOVERNOR HOCHUL, 2025 STATE OF THE STATE, ROCHESTER COMMUNITY**



(ALBANY, NY) - Today **Senator Jeremy Cooney (D-Rochester)** attended Governor Hochul's 2025 "State of the State" address to hear firsthand her priorities for New York State and the Greater Rochester region in the coming year. Many of the Governor's priorities aligned with Senator Cooney's goals for Rochester, namely making our state more affordable, increasing the quality of life for our communities, and supporting our next generation.

“My number one priority is increasing the quality of life for the residents of Monroe County,” said **Senator Cooney**. “Whether it’s setting our students up for success and supporting families, or making housing more affordable and strengthening our infrastructure, it takes a holistic approach to meet the needs of New Yorkers. I am pleased that Governor Hochul shares this commitment and I am eager to work together in this year’s legislative session.”

Below is a list of some of Governor Hochul’s proposals that align with Sen. Cooney’s priorities:

**Tripling the Empire State Child Tax Credit** - Governor Hochul announced her support of Senator Cooney’s bill ([S367](#)) which would expand the state’s child tax credit, a proven method for reducing child poverty. The Senator’s proposal would increase payments to \$1,000 for children under four years old and \$500 for children four and older, a needed change in cities like Rochester where nearly 50% of children live below the poverty line.

**Universal School Meals** - Senator Cooney is a co-sponsor and longtime supporter of an effort ([S594](#)) to bring free school meals to students across New York. Governor Hochul announced her support of the program in an effort to ensure our students have equal access to meals that will allow them to succeed within the classroom.

**First Time Homebuyers** - In her address, Governor Hochul proposed several initiatives to make housing more affordable and homeownership more attainable for first-time homebuyers, including promising to build 50,000 affordable homes statewide in the next two years. Senator Cooney has similarly been at the forefront of promoting homeownership in our community. The Senator’s **HOME Act** would provide \$10,000 for downpayments for first time homebuyers. When paired with another bill of the Senator ([S1157](#)) to allow first time homebuyers to establish savings accounts with a deduction against their personal income tax, Senator Cooney will be helping to lead the charge on housing affordability in 2025.

**Dolly Parton's Imagination Library** - Senator Cooney was pleased to hear Governor Hochul signal her support for expanding Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, a program that puts free books directly in the hands of children ages five and below. Senator Cooney has long-championed a statewide version of the program ([S8514A](#)) to boost literacy rates and instill a love of reading in children at a young age.

**Protecting Highway Workers** - Last year, Senator Cooney introduced legislation that would enhance assault protections for highway workers. The NYS Department of Transportation alone has seen 40 incidents of harassment or assault since 2022. Governor Hochul announced her support of the Senator's bill ([S9782](#)) that would classify the assault of these workers as a Class D felony.

**Investments into Transit Infrastructure** - During her address, Governor Hochul mentioned her support for maintaining investments for infrastructure projects statewide—this includes making public transit faster and repairing our roads. As Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, Senator Cooney will be looking to increase funding for these programs in this year's budget.

**High Speed Rail** - Governor Hochul noted her support for “fast transit” across New York. With high speed rail as one of the Senator's top priorities, Senator Cooney will continue exploring options to bring this technology to our state in the coming years.

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