



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

# Hinchey Statement on Final State Budget

[Michelle Hinchey](#)

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STATEMENT FROM NYS SENATOR  
**MICHELLE HINCHEY**

“This year’s budget process has been an especially tedious one, made more complicated by the fact that we are bracing for a wave of severe federal disinvestment and continued attacks on the values we as New Yorkers hold dear.

“While I believe this budget could have gone further in investing in the programs we care about and protecting our most vulnerable residents, there are many bright wins that need to be celebrated, starting with the full expansion of Universal School Meals. I have led the fight in the Senate for the past four years to see this program available to all students in every school across all corners of New York State. Today, we are making that a reality by guaranteeing free breakfast and lunch and providing real savings for families by putting money back in their pockets every week. Although we were not successful in expanding the farm-to-school program to include breakfast, we will be back next year with that as our top budget priority because every student deserves to have healthy, farm-fresh food.

“We are investing in our BOCES teachers for the first time in 30 years and expanding reimbursement to students in 9th grade, ensuring more students can find their passion in career and technical education with training for jobs for the future. Our commitment to expanding access to community college continues, making it free for adult learners going into high-demand fields, which will be a lifeline for many and help our job market almost immediately. We listened to our small businesses and are clearing the UI debt burden they’ve carried since the pandemic so they can focus on investing in themselves and their local economies, and we also drove significant investment into our rural and upstate housing package, which will help revitalize vacant buildings into affordable homes, strengthen protections for homeowners and renters, and deliver direct rental assistance through the Housing Voucher Access Program - a program we’ve been fighting for for five years. We are also tripling the Child Tax Credit to \$1,000 for families with children under four, and we cut the MTA payroll tax in Dutchess County for many small businesses, municipal governments, and Dutchess Community College, helping to lower the tax burden. Since my first year in the Legislature, we’ve been advocating for our PBA of NYS members - our Forest Rangers and SUNY and Park Police - to receive a 20-year retirement. This has been a labor of love over the last five years, and I’m proud to have finally delivered this important recruitment and retention tool so that we can help attract more people to this profession.

“The lack of mental health services in the Hudson Valley has been a focus for many of us over the last few years, and I want to thank Leader Stewart-Cousins for working with me and advocating tooth and nail, down to the wire, for funding for Astor Services which will expand mental health services for children in school settings across Ulster and Dutchess Counties. This is a great win and one that will

strengthen our communities and support the next generation for years to come.

"These are a handful of the important advances we made in this year's budget and while this prolonged process has been difficult, and in the face of severe federal challenges, we responded and we're prepared to keep fighting for what's next in order to protect the Hudson Valley and the rights and services that are vital to our communities."