

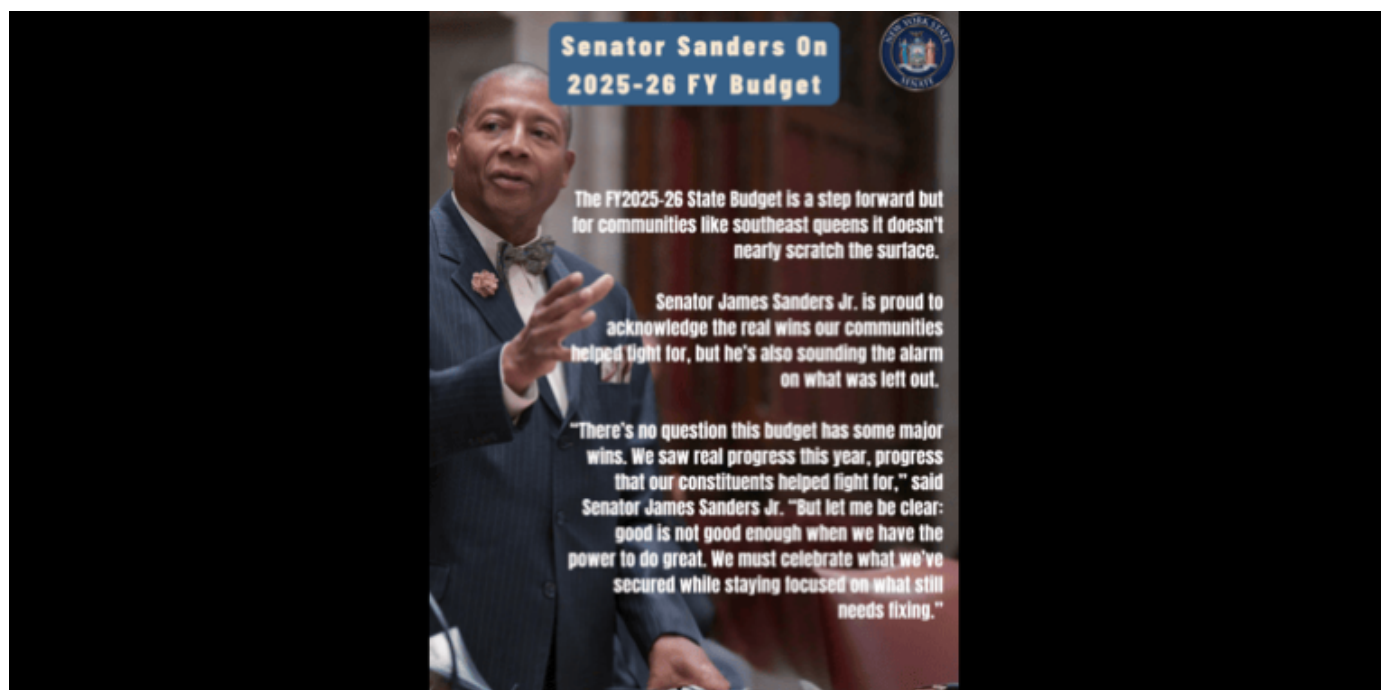


NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

Senator James Sanders Jr. on the 2025 State Budget: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

JAMES SANDERS JR. May 22, 2025



Queens, NY - The FY2025-26 State Budget is a step forward but for communities like southeast queens it doesn't nearly scratch the surface. Senator James Sanders Jr. is proud to acknowledge the real wins our communities helped fight for, but he's also sounding the alarm on what was left out. "There's no question this budget has some major wins. We saw real progress this year, progress that our constituents helped fight for," said Senator James Sanders Jr. "But let me be clear: good is not good enough when we have the power to do great. We must celebrate what we've secured while staying focused on what still needs

fixing.”

One of the biggest concerns is that Southeast Queens, once again, didn’t get the full attention it needs. Flooding continues to be a real and damaging issue in the Rockaways and nearby neighborhoods, and this budget doesn’t do enough to solve it. Access to hospitals and emergency care is still lacking in our community and that needs to change. These aren’t just budget lines, they’re about people’s lives, homes, and peace of mind. We’ll keep pushing for the resources and services Southeast Queens deserves.

Now, let’s talk about the good. This budget makes important strides in education, housing, and infrastructure. For the first time ever, all students in New York will receive free breakfast and lunch at school. That’s a big deal for families. On top of that, schools are getting a record \$26 billion in Foundation Aid, with extra support for schools serving English language learners and high-need students.

In housing, a new voucher program will provide \$50 million each year to help families stay off the streets and in safe homes. NYCHA received \$225 million, its highest funding yet and Mitchell-Lama developments and public housing outside NYC also got a boost. When it comes to getting around, the state stepped up to fully fund the MTA’s \$35 billion capital plan, which means better service, station upgrades, and accessibility improvements. Local streets and highways are getting attention too, with \$100 million going toward repairs through the CHIPS program.

There’s also progress on the fight for racial justice. The state’s Commission on Reparations Remedies was given an 18-month extension, allowing more time for public input and deeper study of how to right historical wrongs. But we can’t ignore what’s missing. The budget

doesn't include a plan to study public banking or allow local governments to create their own banks, something that could bring real financial power back to our neighborhoods. It also fails to streamline MWBE certification between the City and State, making it harder than it should be for minority- and women-owned businesses to grow. On top of that, the budget weakens the standards private schools are held to, meaning they no longer have to meet the same academic expectations as public schools.

And while we talk a lot about supporting MWBEs, the state still hasn't committed real dollars to back that up. The Division of Minority and Women's Business Development needs at least \$5 million to do the job right and that funding just isn't there yet.

Another concerning move, funding for the Cannabis Chair, a position meant to guide and regulate New York's growing cannabis industry was stripped from the budget. This cuts short a chance to ensure equity, oversight, and opportunity in a sector that was supposed to uplift communities harmed by past drug policies.

To make matters worse, the budget was delayed by unrelated policy fights, such as disagreements over school rules, rather than actual fiscal issues. As a result, legislators have not been paid since March. However, the Governor has continued to receive her salary during this time, a fact Senator Sanders believes is unfair. That's why he has introduced a bill to make sure the Governor is also held accountable during future budget delays.

"We made progress this year, and I'm proud of what we got done but there's still plenty of work ahead," said Senator Sanders. "Our communities need action, not just promises. And as always, I'll keep fighting to make sure Southeast Queens gets its fair share."

If you have any questions or would like to speak to the Senator please reach out to
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