



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Walczyk

STATEMENT FROM SENATOR WALCZYK ON THE CONCLUSION OF SESSION

MARK WALCZYK June 23, 2025



"In January, Governor Kathy Hochul declared her intention to work with the Legislature to make New York a better, safer, more affordable place to live. Instead, we have witnessed betrayal of trust, secret schemes, and partisanship over good government; as Albany Democrats have plunged our great state into turmoil.

They rammed through a record \$254 billion budget—the largest in our state’s history—filled with reckless spending on things nobody in the state asked for. The budget takes from the taxpayers to give \$800 million in credits to Hollywood and Broadway, another \$1 billion for a green energy slush fund that will only increase your energy bills, \$150 million to transform cultural experiences

in Albany, \$10 million for the Attorney General's private defense fund, and the list goes on...

From January through June, Democrats passed legislation to coddle criminals, dismantle our corrections system, and make it more difficult for police to keep our communities safe. They voted against repealing the HALT Act, they failed to require known drug-mules to go through body-scanners when visiting prisons, and they passed a bill to allow inmates to sue corrections officers for up to three years after release if they feel they've been 'psychologically harmed' while incarcerated. Instead of protecting those who protect us, they prioritized misguided policies that compromise public safety.

Instead of empowering energy independence or promoting serious production, Democrats passed the 'Customer Savings and Reliability Act,' which will not make energy more reliable, and won't save you a dime. It will, however, give power to government bureaucrats to decide which communities in New York should have their natural gas lines decommissioned and force new users to pay for hookups - raising your gas rates. They also passed Senate bill S1464, a ban on plastic packaging, estimated to add \$800 a year to your grocery bill. If signed into law, this legislation will make a number of our favorite foods and products 'not for sale in New York.'

While the Senate Democrats did pass thirty-three different changes to election law - mostly favoring their political tactics - they rejected my bill to require voters show ID at the polling place. Actually, they rejected Voter ID proposals three times in the last six months even though thirty-six other states have successfully adopted Voter ID laws and over 80% of Americans support it. We offered an amendment to allow free ID and voting by special ballot if you forget it on election day, but Senate Democrats continually rejected common sense and compromise.

Was it all bad? No. When you're throwing that much money around, there were some important programs in Education, Highway infrastructure, and others which were supported. I'm also pleased to have worked to get a number of pieces of legislation through both houses of the legislature in support of the local governments I represent. And, in a good first step, we passed a bill I co-sponsored to establish a 'fiscal cliff task force' to conduct a study on the state's public assistance programs and to make recommendations on weaning people off benefits.

These are small victories and until the power dynamics in our state change, I worry about the future.

This session displayed a catastrophic failure on the part of the Albany Democrats, who have prioritized political ambitions over the needs and security of New Yorkers. It is imperative that we demand accountability from those leaders who have betrayed our trust and placed partisanship over the people they swore an oath to represent. I will NOT back down; I remain steadfast in my fight for you and New York State's future!"