



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Grisanti

"The Buffalo News" State Senate working to help Western New York

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During the election last fall, Western New York was a battleground for control of the State Senate. By returning control of the Senate to the Republicans, the voters sent a clear message that they were tired of the region being ignored by Albany and sick of the inaction on the issues that truly matter—jobs, taxes and spending.

In less than three months, we have already begun to address those issues, with the leadership of the senators that represent Western New York.

After two years of Senate inaction, Sen. Mark Grisanti, R-Buffalo, led the passage of the UB 2020 plan in the Senate. This plan is a priority for Senate Republicans in the budget negotiations because it would jump-start economic revitalization across the region. Assembly Democrats from Western New York should insist that the Assembly join the Senate in acting on UB 2020.

In addition to supporting UB 2020, the Senate budget includes measures to help reverse damaging tax-and-spend policies and stop the exodus from New York. The Senate budget plan spends less than the executive budget, repeals taxes on local economic development agencies, includes \$138 million in capital money for UB, restores money for Roswell Park Cancer Institute and redistributes school aid to provide more for Western New York schools that received a disproportionate share of aid cuts.

To give businesses new incentives to create private sector jobs, the Senate passed a measure to provide a tax credit of up to \$5,000 for every new job created, including a larger credit if the new employee is hired off unemployment.

We have to go even further to cut taxes, but first, we must cut government spending. That's why the Senate passed a state spending cap bill, sponsored by Sen. Mike Ranzenhofer, R-Clarence. By proposing spending reductions and other reforms, the Senate's budget plan meets the goals of our spending cap, which is one of the most critical steps we can take to break the never-ending cycle of tax increases that stifle job creation.

With the strong support of Sen. Pat Gallivan, R-Elma, we passed a bill to cap local property taxes at 2 percent or the consumer price index, whichever is less; as well as two measures to provide mandate relief to school districts and local governments to help them control costs.

Another important economic measure is a new, permanent energy program called Recharge NY, sponsored by Sen. George Mazarz, R-Newfane. The bill passed by the Senate would double the amount of low-cost power available to businesses to reduce their energy costs and help retain and create jobs.

Senate Republicans understand and are addressing the concerns of Western New York, especially getting the UB 2020 plan in place as soon as possible. We will stay focused on the issues that really matter and can improve people's lives.

Dean G. Skelos, R-Nassau County, is majority leader of the New York State Senate.