



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Senator Kennedy Releases Statement on 2011-12 Budget

Timothy M. Kennedy

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Kennedy cites exclusion of UB 2020, massive cuts to students, millionaires' bailout as reasons for 'no' vote

ALBANY, N.Y. – For the first time in five years, Albany has passed a budget on time. While Senator Timothy M. Kennedy, D-58th District, is proud of the accomplishment, he is deeply concerned about some of the details contained in – or absent from – the budget bills.

In standing up to explain Western New York's opposition to the budget plan, Senator Kennedy cited three central concerns – the [exclusion of UB 2020](#), massive cuts the region's classrooms simultaneous to a [tax bailout for Wall Street millionaires](#) and the

lack of tax relief for Middle Class families and small businesses.

"I am pleased that New York State has its first on-time budget in five years. This is proof that Albany is changing its ways. It is also a result of Governor Cuomo's leadership amid a \$10 billion budget deficit and our commitment to building a state government that works more efficiently.

"However, I am deeply disappointed that UB 2020 was not included in its entirety in the final budget. Western New York is suffering from severe economic distress and population decline, and swift action is needed on measures like UB 2020 that will help spark economic growth and job creation throughout our region.

"Hardworking Western New Yorkers are impatient for change. As demonstrated by the recently released census data, many Western New Yorkers got sick of waiting for change and economic resurgence, and they took off in search of jobs and opportunities. I made a commitment to only vote for a budget that includes the entire UB 2020 plan. This budget does not do that.

"While UB 2020 is absent from the final budget agreement, the fight will go on. We can't let this unfortunate exclusion kill, or even slow, our efforts to pass the bill this year.

"Regardless of my disappointment on UB 2020 this week, I do look forward to the summit the Governor will host to discuss the next steps toward making UB 2020 a reality. I am optimistic that, following the information and understanding we share at the summit, he will join our community in stressing the economic urgency of passing the legislation this year. With Governor Cuomo's support and leadership, I believe we will get the job done.

"In addition to the exclusion of UB 2020, I'm also troubled by the budget's impact on Western New York's schoolchildren. This budget takes money away from Western New York's students and gives a tax bailout to Wall Street millionaires. At the same time, there is no tax relief for hardworking Middle Class families or small businesses in this budget. It does not contain a property tax cap, which the Senate passed earlier this year. The absence of the property tax cap, combined with the education cuts, could result in higher property tax bills for Western New York families and small businesses.

“By simply holding the line on taxes for millionaires – as this budget does with Middle Class families and small businesses – we could restore critical funding for Western New York’s schoolchildren, seniors and families. We could make additional restorations to empower our schools to improve student performance and find efficiencies through shared services and technologies. Instead, that money is taken from the hands of our students and put into the pockets of Wall Street millionaires.

“I’m proud to say we have an on-time budget. While it is proof that Albany is changing, there is still much more work to be done. It’s time to turn our attention to the other challenges facing our state and our region. We need to rebuild the Western New York economy, starting with the passage of the UB 2020 legislation. We also need to revamp our state government and clean up Albany with serious ethics reform and independent redistricting that will end political gerrymandering prior to the 2012 redrawing cycle. I’m optimistic that we will continue to move New York State forward over the next few months.”