



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Budget Conference Committees Convene

JAMES L. SEWARD March 14, 2012

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ALBANY, 03/14/12 -- State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) has been named to two key joint budget conference committees which held their first meetings today in Albany. Senator Seward will serve on the higher education subcommittee and the education subcommittee.

Regarding his education subcommittee assignment Senator Seward said:

“The senate budget resolution approved this week takes \$200 million the governor had tabbed for

competitive grants and redirects it to general education aid. I will be fighting to ensure that the lion's share of that funding is sent to our low-wealth, upstate school districts. Rural school districts simply do not have the tax base that other wealthier areas of the state have to draw from and are struggling to provide students with the essentials."

Regarding his higher education subcommittee assignment Senator Seward said:

"Our SUNY schools and community colleges are the first choice for many New York students as they take their next educational step. Further, these schools are often the top employer in many of our local communities, driving our upstate economy. Adding operating aid to support our community colleges, developing a plan to address SUNY's ongoing capital needs and maintaining the tuition assistance program (TAP) are among my priorities to secure a promising future for our students and our higher education system."

The conference committees are made up of five senators and five assemblymen tasked with negotiating budget differences between the houses, in concert with the governor, to develop a final spending plan. The committees conduct open, public meetings which can be viewed on-line at nysenate.gov.

"Both the senate and the assembly have been following the agreed upon budget schedule and are working toward completion of an on-time, if not early, state budget. Utilizing the conference committee process will lead to the successful completion of a fiscally-responsible spending plan in advance of April 1st," Seward concluded.