



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

Senator Serrano Comments on the Enacted \$142 Billion State Budget for 2013-14

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(Albany, NY) - Senator José M. Serrano (D-Manhattan/Bronx) commented on today's enacted \$142 billion state budget for fiscal year 2013-14.

"While I am happy we've completed our budget votes ahead of the mandated deadline, I believe that this budget contained room for improvement in both substance and process. "A real increase in the minimum wage for workers in our state was long overdue, but the wage increase plan that was put forward today falls short and doesn't raise the wage quickly enough to keep pace with the needs of individuals and working families. Under this budget plan, the minimum wage takes three years to grow to \$9.00 per hour and does not account for any future automatic indexing increases.

"I am also very disappointed that today's budget didn't address the DREAM Act, something of critical importance to hardworking immigrant students across our state. For that reason I voted against the ELFA budget bill which should have contained the necessary language to authorize the Dream Act. If enacted, the DREAM Act would have provided thousands of students regardless of immigration status with eligibility for the state's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). On behalf of the immigrant families in the South Bronx, East Harlem, and across the State, I will continue to fight to ensure the DREAM Act becomes a reality."

Senator Serrano, who serves as Chair of the Senate Democratic Conference, was pleased with certain aspects of the state budget such as an extension of the millionaire's tax which extends the fair and progressive tax code in New York.

"Additionally, as the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks & Recreation, I am happy that this budget provides a vital infusion of capital funding for State Parks, increases aid to libraries, and provides additional funding for zoos, botanical gardens, and aquariums. Programs such as these, not only enhance the quality of life for New Yorkers, but they provide a vital return on investment to help the state grow economically.

"While this budget achieves progress in some areas, there is obviously more work to be done. My hope is that the Senate Majority Coalition understands that had the Senate Democrats been included during budget negotiations, we could have helped draft a better budget that fully addressed the needs of all New Yorkers. I would like to thank our Governor Andrew Cuomo for his leadership on this budget and our Senate Democratic Leader, Andrea Stewart-Cousins for her leadership and I look forward to addressing our progressive issues that will benefit working families across this state."