



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

## Senator Serrano, Chair of the Democratic Conference, Outlines Budgetary Agenda for the 2014-2015 State Budget

JOSÉ M. SERRANO March 19, 2014

| ISSUE: **BUDGET**

Dear Neighbor,

### Campaign Finance Reform

As we in the State Legislature work toward a final 2014-2015 budget agreement, I would like to outline a number of important budgetary measures that I am fighting for. I want to be clear that I have always, and will always continue to fight for budgetary measures that enhance the lives of the people of the 29th district. Some priorities remain the same from last year, like advocating for **Campaign Finance Reform**. Thanks to our shared advocacy and pressure from residents of our community, Governor Cuomo has indicated his support for **Campaign Finance Reform**, and it is my sincere hope that it makes it into the final budget agreement WITH the much needed public matching funds component.

### The DREAM Act

Another major priority is the **DREAM Act**. I was deeply disappointed that the **DREAM Act** legislation brought before the Senate on Monday failed to achieve enough votes for passage. The **DREAM Act** would provide educational opportunities for so many immigrant students, allowing them a better shot at achieving the American Dream. Make no mistake – the **DREAM Act** isn't a handout, rather an opportunity for students to shine. Regrettably, this issue has become one that's fallen victim to politics in Albany, while many hardworking immigrants are left on the sidelines. Passage of the **DREAM Act** is long overdue, and I will fight for its inclusion in the final state budget.

### Universal Pre-K (UPK)

My colleagues and I in the Senate Democratic Conference continue to fight for **UPK** for all children throughout New York State. Study after study point to the clear academic benefits **UPK** has for students throughout their entire academic careers. While Governor Andrew Cuomo had provided funding for **UPK** in his Executive Budget Proposal, I believe we must ensure

that the budget for **UPK** is constant and sustainable. Every dollar we put towards **UPK** is a solid investment in our children and the future of New York State. I remain committed to fighting to ensure that there is a sustainable stream of **UPK** funding for the children of New York.

### **State Park Funding**

Our beloved **state parks** are the crown jewel of our state. As the Ranking Democrat on the Senate committee which oversees parks, I am committed to ensuring that our parks receive adequate funding. Unfortunately, the recent Senate one-house Budget Resolution removed more than \$92 million in capital funding that would have been used to maintain and repair rapidly aging park infrastructure. Recent estimates indicate nearly \$1 billion backlog of capital repairs for our state park system. Meanwhile, our parks continue to set records in regards to visitorship, with more than 60 million people visiting our **state parks** in 2013. I have taken on the task of circulating a sign-on letter to all my senate colleagues, asking Governor Cuomo and all legislative leaders to please join in the fight to restore these much needed capital funds. Preserving parks is not a Democratic or Republican issue, and I expect to have wide, bipartisan support for my efforts to restore the \$92 million in capital funds.

### **Tax Credit for Renters**

The **tax credit for renters** would have provided much needed support for apartment renters across New York City. Governor Cuomo made this tax credit a priority in his Executive Budget, but unfortunately the Senate Republican leadership removed this funding from their one-house budget resolution. The **tax credit for renters** would have provided a well deserved break for apartment renters who are already stretched to their limit financially. Our conference will fight for this measure to remain in the final enacted budget.