



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

Senator Valesky Hails Passage of Fourth Consecutive on-Time State Budget

DAVID J. VALESKY April 1, 2014

| ISSUE: **AGING, AGRICULTURE, BANKS, FAMILIES, CITIES**

ALBANY, NY—State Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) today lauded the passage of the state’s fourth and historic consecutive on-time budget. This has not been accomplished with the same Governor and legislative leaders in more than 40 years.

“This budget fulfills the promise we made to middle class New Yorkers while holding spending growth below 2 percent,” Senator Valesky said. “We worked in a bipartisan fashion to address the priorities of our constituents—among them increased school aid, property tax relief, health care, and growing the economy. I am pleased to have worked with my colleagues in the Majority Coalition to produce a budget that works for all New Yorkers.”

All Funds spending (excluding Extraordinary Federal Aid for Superstorm Sandy and the Affordable Care Act) totals \$137.9 billion, an increase of \$2.5 billion or 1.8 percent over fiscal year 2013-14.

Highlights of the budget include:

EDUCATION

- \$1.1 billion increase (5.3 percent) in education funding, the largest increase in more than five years. 70 percent of that increase is targeted toward high-need schools.
- \$602 million in Gap Elimination Aid; championed by the Senate, this allocation is seven times the Assembly proposal and 80 percent higher than the Executive Budget proposal.
- Common Core reforms to ban standardized tests for pre-k through second grade; ensures the results of testing for grades 3-8 is not used against students in placement or on permanent records; establishes strict data protections.
- Increase in maximum Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award by \$165 to \$5,165.

- Increase in Community College base aid by \$75 per student
- New Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) scholarship where full tuition scholarships to any SUNY or CUNY college or university will be offered to the top ten percent of high school graduates if they pursue a STEM career and work in New York for five years.

TAX REFORM

- \$1.5 billion in property tax relief through a tax freeze plan where homeowners will receive property tax relief if their local governments stay within the property tax cap and encourage consolidation or shared services.
- Accelerated phase out of 18-a temporary assessment for all customers, saving residential customers \$92.3 million, industrial customers \$28.9 million; and commercial customers \$77.7m on energy bills in the coming year.
- Lowered cost of doing businesses for manufacturers through tax credits and reduced tax rates, cutting and simplifying business tax rates and moving the estate tax exemption to mirror the federal level, all in an effort to bolster businesses and the economy, especially in Upstate New York.

OTHER

- Expansion of the successful Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) Program to include more than 25,000 more seniors in New York State by increasing income thresholds for the first time since 2001.
- \$40 million in increased funding to municipalities to deal with the effects of an unusually long and cold winter on infrastructure.
- Protection for consumers from surprise medical bills from out-of-network physicians.
- Increased access to child care through an additional \$34 million for child care subsidies.
- A \$9 million increase to the Environmental Protection Fund (\$162 million).
- New provisions to combat corruption in government, including new crimes for violating the public trust; higher penalties for public corruption (including a lifetime ban); strengthening enforcement efforts at the Board of Election through a new, independent enforcement unit; a pilot program for matching funds for political campaigns; and expanded disclosure requirements for legislators and political contributors.
- Enhanced prevention of texting while driving by young drivers. Young and new drivers convicted of

texting-while-driving will have their license suspended for 120 days on the first offense, and a year for the second offense.

More information about the 2014-15 Enacted Budget may be found at <http://publications.budget.ny.gov/budgetFP/enacted1415.html>.