



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George D. Maziarz

## Senator Maziarz' statement on 2014-2015 enacted state budget

GEORGE D. MAZIARZ April 1, 2014

The state budget for the fiscal year that begins today contains many positive elements to move our economy in the right direction and create jobs.

Notable features of the plan include speeding up the phase-out of the 18-A energy assessment, a tax that I have railed against since its inception. This action will help lower utility bills for homeowners and businesses, saving them \$600 over the next three years. In other steps to reduce the cost of doing business in New York, we cut manufacturers' income tax rates to ZERO and established a robust property tax credit for these businesses. We are also reducing the business tax rate to its lowest level in nearly 50 years.

Lowering costs for businesses will mean more jobs in our communities. This should continue to be our primary objective at the state level—making New York a place where economic activity can flourish. The opportunities that will be created by making our state more business-friendly are exciting to think about.

Another major focus of this budget is education funding. We are providing more than a billion dollars in new funding for schools statewide, including more than \$17 million for public schools in my Senate district. When you consider that achievement, plus reducing the Gap Elimination Adjustment by more than \$600 million dollars this year, we are making major steps forward. The Smart Schools Bond Act, which voters will decide on this

November, will also add another \$2 billion in funding for critical technology upgrades in schools, \$40 million of which will come back to schools in the 62<sup>nd</sup> Senate District. Of significance, we are also taking steps to reduce the pressures on students from high stakes Common Core testing, as well as protect the privacy of student information.

We were also successful in designating \$40 million for road repairs in our communities after the unusually harsh winter we have experienced in Western New York. This money will help fix potholes and make our streets safer.

In a major victory for taxpayers in the 62<sup>nd</sup> Senate District and across Western New York, this budget did not include a penny to fund college tuition for illegal immigrants' children, sometimes referred to as the "Dream Act," or to provide free college educations to convicted criminals. I strongly oppose those ideas and worked hard to ensure that were not included in the budget.

Locally, I'm glad we were able provide funding to continue the operation of the Western New York Psychiatric Center in West Seneca for another year and we will continue to lobby the Governor and the Office of Mental Health to keep this facility open permanently. We are also investing \$12.5 million into Niagara County Community College for the design and construction of a new learning commons in order to better serve students.

Lastly, I want to be clear that while this budget is good in many respects, it is far from perfect. As an example, it continues to set tens of millions of dollars aside to implement the unSAFE Act and create a statewide database for checking backgrounds and tracking ammunition sales. This is reprehensible and I voted against this aspect of the budget agreement. Like the unSAFE Act itself, these measures represent an unwarranted infringement on our Second Amendment rights and they should be opposed.

Of course the budget touches many other areas of state operations, and for more details I invite my constituents to visit <http://www.nysenate.gov/GetTheBudgetFacts>.

#####