



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Cecilia Tkaczyk

Increased School Aid, Property Tax Relief and Farm Support Included in 2014-15 State Budget

CECILIA TKACZYK April 2, 2014

| ISSUE: **BUDGET**



State Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk said she voted for the negotiated 2014-15 State Budget despite reservations on some of the appropriations. “The budget is far from perfect,” she said. “But it is also far better than the Budget Resolution that was offered by the Senate’s coalition leaders two weeks ago.”

The new state budget “provides a significant increase in school aid, property tax relief for homeowners, and substantial assistance for Upstate manufacturers and small farms that will help them to grow and create new jobs,” she said.

“It will also strengthen ethics laws and increase punishment for public officials who accept bribes or otherwise disgrace their office,” she added.

Since the Governor released the Executive Budget in January, Senator Tkaczyk has advocated for additional school aid. She noted that the adopted budget provides an increase of \$1.1 billion for school aid, about \$300 million more than what was in the Senate resolution, and \$500 million more than what was initially proposed in the Executive Budget.

“While I am pleased to see education aid increased beyond what the Senate Leadership would appropriate, I have conferred with school superintendents in my district who believe that for some schools, the increase will not forestall layoffs and educational programming cuts,” she said.

Senator Tkaczyk also noted she was “disappointed that Senate leadership would allow \$300 million to be allocated for pre-K in New York City and only \$40 million for programs in the rest of the state.”

The final budget also includes major improvements for the Community Mental Health Reinvestment Act, a priority for Senator Tkaczyk, the Ranking member of the Senate Standing Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities.

The budget extends Reinvestment for three years, and increases the amount of money saved per bed closed by 50 percent. Community-based services will receive \$25 million new dollars this year, and \$44 million in 2015.

Assistance for small farms was also included in the Budget. The Beginning Farmers NY fund will provide grants of up to \$50,000 for small farms in operation less than 10 years. Overall, the final budget adds about \$8.4 million to Executive Budget and a \$5.7 million increase over last year to promote NY agricultural products and support a number of agricultural programs.

Unfortunately, the budget falls short in several other areas, especially in fixing the crisis facing our Early Intervention programs, which provides critical services to infants and toddlers with disabilities. Senator Tkaczyk said she was hopeful that situation could be addressed with legislation as the session continues.