



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

## Senator Martins: New State Budget Delivers Tax Relief, Controls Spending, and Keeps New York State Headed in the Right Direction

JACK M. MARTINS April 3, 2014

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Senator Jack Martins (R-7th Senate District) announced passage of the 2014-15 New York State budget which delivers tax relief, controls state spending, provides additional state aid for schools and local governments, and keeps New York State headed in the right direction.

“Providing tax relief for residents and businesses, controlling spending, and making smart investments are what we need to do to ensure New York State continues to move forward;

that's exactly what this state budget does. For the fourth consecutive year, we've delivered a fiscally responsible budget without raising a single tax or fee. That's exactly what I promised to do when I began serving as Senator and I'm proud we continue to keep that promise," said Senator Martins.

The state budget maintains fiscal discipline by keeping state spending growth under 2%, while also focusing on key priorities, including:

**Delivering Tax Relief:**

- Creates a new property tax rebate program to provide direct tax relief to taxpayers in school districts and municipalities that stay within the two percent property tax cap and submit efficiency plans to the state that result in local cost savings of at least one percent or have already implemented cost reduction plans at the local level.
- Provides a state record of \$3.4 billion for the STAR property tax relief program.
- Further reduces an energy tax surcharge on businesses to help them lower their costs and create jobs.
- Lowers taxes on businesses so that they can save money and reinvest it into job creation and business development.

**Investing in Education:**

- Provides over \$2.6 billion for Long Island schools to help fund important programs, services, and operations which provide students with a quality education.
- Significantly reduces the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA), an unfair school aid cut imposed by the prior State leadership which caused Long Island schools to lose significant

amounts of state education aid.

- Takes action to reform the State Education Department's flawed implementation of Common Core by:
  - o Prohibiting administering standardized tests to students in Pre-K through grade two;
  - o Prohibiting state assessment test scores for grades three through eight from being recorded on a student's permanent record;
  - o Preventing school districts from making any student promotion or placement decision solely based on the state-administered assessment tests for grades three through eight;
  - o Limiting the amount of time that can be spent on state assessment tests, locally developed standardized testing, and test preparation;
  - o Protecting the privacy of personally identifiable information and creating a parents bill of rights for privacy and security;
  - o Halting the state's relationship with inBloom.

#### **Increasing Aid for Municipalities:**

- Local governments will receive over \$517 million in state aid to help repair and improve their local roads and bridges. Localities will receive a \$40 million increase from the prior year's total to help them recover from the significant road damage caused by this winter's harsher than normal weather.

- Additional mandate relief for counties through a complete state takeover of their Medicaid costs. This will provide significant savings to help reduce the burden on local taxpayers.

### **Making Healthcare More Affordable:**

- New York's Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) program will be expanded to cover the prescription drug needs of more senior citizens. Income eligibility is expanded from \$35,000 to \$75,000 for singles and from \$50,000 to \$100,000 for married seniors, allowing more Long Island seniors to reduce their prescription drug costs.

- Consumers will now have new protections from unexpected medical bills from out-of-network physicians. A new dispute resolution process, network adequacy requirements, claim submission requirements, and improved disclosure by insurers will help patients better navigate the insurance process and reduce the incidence of costly, surprise bills.

### **Protecting Our Environment:**

- Provides a record funding amount of over \$162 million for the State's Environmental Protection Fund, an increase of over \$9 million, to help ensure clean air and water and protect open space.