



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Senator Griffo's Weekly Column #15: Budget Delivers on Tax Relief

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I voted for this year's state budget because it will provide more than \$10 billion in tax relief for families and job creators, while creating no new taxes or fees.

This budget sets aside a record \$3.4 billion to fully fund our state School Tax Relief Program (STAR) and Enhanced STAR for the benefit of middle-class families and seniors.

This budget also includes a \$1.5 billion property tax freeze program that will help 2.8 million homeowners, including 1.7 million upstate. It rewards municipalities and school districts who hold the line on tax increases by sending property tax rebate checks to their residents.

We're keeping our commitment to provide a \$350 tax rebate to more than 460,000 upstate families with children under 17 years old. Checks will be mailed in October. In future years, taxpayers will receive credits on their annual return.

We're investing a record \$1 billion in the Earned Income Tax Credit to help low-paid, low-skilled workers keep their jobs and more of their income. The credit can worth be as much as \$8,159 to a single parent.

We're bringing New York in line with the federal government on the estate tax, raising the state exemption threshold and protecting about 2,800 farms and 4,000 estates.

I've heard from many people about the challenges of doing business in New York. I want to help those business owners as well as attract others to come do business in the Mohawk Valley and North Country.

Our budget helps achieve that goal, providing relief to industrial and commercial businesses by phasing out an energy tax (sometimes called the “18-a surcharge”). This tax, which is also being reduced for residential customers, will decrease by \$200 million annually until it’s completely eliminated in 2017.

We’re helping manufacturers compete in a global market by dropping their income tax rate to zero and creating a new 20 percent property tax credit, worth \$100 million annually, to help spur job growth. We’re also lowering the business income rate for all other types of companies from 7.1 percent to 6.5 percent.

I know that’s a lot to digest, but this is the bottom line: We want people not only to live in New York, but to start their business – or grow it – right here. We’re staying within our 2 percent spending cap so we can provide billions in tax relief and make this state more attractive to homeowners and more competitive for business owners.

This budget provides real relief to overtaxed New Yorkers. For this reason – and a few more I’ll discuss in future columns – I voted ‘yes.’