



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael H. Ranzenhofer

Focus: Working for you, your family, our community

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December 16, 2014

A dark blue rectangular graphic with a faint, circular seal of the New York State Senate in the background. The seal features a figure holding a scale and a sword, with the words "NEW YORK STATE" and "SENATE" visible. Overlaid on the graphic is white text. At the top, it says "Look for..." followed by a horizontal line. Below the line, it reads "Senator Mike Ranzenhofer's Monthly Column". Another horizontal line follows. At the bottom, it says "...In your local newspaper the third week of every month".

By: Michael H. Ranzenhofer

It was truly an honor to be re-elected last month to another term as your New York State Senator. To each and every resident of the 61st Senate District: Thank you for your continued support and confidence in my ability to represent you in the State Capitol. I am excited to continue to represent you, your family and our community.

Working together, we have made some progress in Albany. The State Budget has been passed on time now for four consecutive years. Each one of these budgets has controlled spending, closing a \$15 billion budget deficit. As a result, 49 different tax cuts have been enacted so that \$5.6 billion could be returned to taxpayers.

\$5.6 billion is more than just a number; it represents real relief for Western New Yorkers. Middle-class families pay the lowest income tax rate in over 60 years. For manufacturers, tax rates are at their lowest since before World War I. For small businesses, it means the lowest corporate tax rate since 1968.

Despite all of these positive actions, there is still work to be done in an effort to keep our State and our economy on the right track. Creating jobs in the private sector, ensuring our children receive a first-rate education and repealing burdensome business regulations will be just some of my top priorities in my fourth term.

I am eager to continue working on so many of these important issues. While it may feel like Election Day was yesterday, the 2015 Legislative Session is right around the corner.

Even though the next session hasn't even started yet, there continues to be speculation surrounding two controversial issues, a possible pay raise for legislators and Thruway toll hike.

First, some have suggested the State Legislature could be called back for a special session by year-end to vote to increase pay for State lawmakers. As I have said in the past, I would not be supportive of an increase in pay for members of the Senate and Assembly. Simply put, it would not be appropriate at this time.

Second, I am very concerned that the Thruway Authority will resort to toll hikes to pay for the Tappan Zee Bridge. The Thruway Authority released its proposed budget last week, and the budget plan is projecting shortfalls over the next few years due to the multi-billion dollar downstate project. Western New Yorkers should not be socked with the cost of having to build that new bridge. I will fight very hard to make sure that doesn't happen.

Whether it is stopping a toll increase or keeping an eye on your hard-earned tax dollars, you can count on me to represent your interests in the State Capitol. Thank you again for giving me the chance to continue to work for you. I want to wish you and your family a Happy Holiday and a healthy, prosperous New Year!

Senator Ranzenhofer's monthly column appeared in the Amherst and Clarence Bee on December 17th.