



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo Statement on Governor's State of the State Address & Budget Proposal

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO January 21, 2015

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Governor Cuomo's proposed budget respects the spending cap, while offering tax relief to property owners and incentives for businesses to expand and add jobs. I share these priorities, so it's helpful the governor has started the negotiations off at this point.

My goal is to help deliver a fifth consecutive on-time budget – a plan that will help bring prosperity to the people of the Mohawk Valley and Northern New York.

I received the entirety of the governor's plan and vision for the first time today. My colleagues and I will now begin a thorough review. As I work, I welcome the opportunity to discuss various ideas with my constituents.

Generally, the big topic of the next two months will be how best to allocate the one-time, \$5 billion surplus generated from financial settlements. The governor has proposed using some of the money for upstate economic development and for building broadband infrastructure in rural areas, which are two concepts I support.

I also believe that tax relief for both individuals and business owners has to be a focus of the deliberations. I'll be pushing for my own New Start NY initiative, which I proposed as a way to bring real tax relief to existing businesses and give them incentive to hire more workers or expand their operations.

Education remains an integral part of our mission, so I'm pleased to see the governor has again proposed an increase in funding. In the coming days, I'll be looking to see if his proposal treats schools in my district in a fair and equitable way. I continue to advocate for the elimination of the Gap Elimination Adjustment. As I've said before: We took from the schools during the lean times. Now it's time to give it back.

While the governor did not address it, we must continue to lower the cost of doing business in New York by eliminating nonsense regulations. There are more than 2,000 rules that hinder private sector job growth. Many of these can be eliminated.

I was disappointed to hear little from the governor about mandate relief. This remains a priority issue for many in village, town and county governments and should have been seriously addressed in conjunction with the tax cap. I will continue to advocate for providing relief where feasible.

Common Core remains an issue. We've instituted delays in tests being used for student and teacher performance, but I remain concerned that the Regents have allowed too much testing. Our students should be taught how to think, not how to answer a specific set of questions on a piece of paper.

Finally, there's an issue of ethics. The arrests and trials of various former legislators seems to continue unabated. I will continue to call for term limits, both on the Executive and Legislature, as well as leadership positions.

I look forward to receiving feedback from my constituents about the governor's proposals and incorporating their thoughts – to the extent possible – into a responsible, on time budget.