



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Senate Republicans Call For a Budget That Returns \$1 Billion to Schools by Ending GEA

ROBERT G. ORTT February 10, 2015

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Senator Robert Ortt (R,C,I-North Tonawanda) and dozens of others in the State Senate Majority held a press conference in Albany to discuss their plan to repeal the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA). The Senate Republican Conference is proposing to return \$1 billion to schools across the state by accelerating the complete elimination of the GEA in the 2015-2016 state budget.

Last month, Sen. Ortt co-sponsored a bill introduced by state Senator Patrick Gallivan (R,C,I-Elma) that would get rid of the state's formula that determines how much money is cut from aid promised to local school districts.

"Getting rid of the GEA will alleviate the gaping budget holes facing school districts across Western New York," said Sen. Ortt. "My district has some of the state's most financially strained urban and rural areas. It's important to ensure all students are afforded equal opportunities for education. Eliminating the GEA would do just that."

The Governor's Executive Budget proposes an overall \$1.1 billion increase in education funding over last year. That increase, however, was not specifically tied to the elimination of the \$1 billion needed for this year's GEA.

The Senate Majority will be proposing a budget that uses the majority of the \$1.1 billion increase proposed in the Executive Budget – up to \$600 million – and is working to indentify the sources for the additional \$300-\$400 million needed this fiscal year to eliminate the GEA once and for all.

"The GEA was passed in 2010 when New York City Democrats ran state government, much to the detriment of Upstate and Western New York," said Ortt. "Unfortunately, this measure has been hurting school officials, teachers, and children ever since. I promised my constituents I would help overcome this unfair mechanism, and today is an important step in realizing that goal."

The GEA was implemented in 2010 by former Gov. David Paterson and the Democrats who controlled the Senate and the Assembly.