



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Senate Passes 2015-16 State Budget

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ALBANY, 03/31/15 -- State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) today commented on the 2015-16 state budget:

“Several of the leading concerns I hear on a daily basis - education aid, property tax relief, upstate economic development, and infrastructure needs - will be addressed by the new state budget.

“The elimination of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) which has cost local schools dearly was a prime focus of mine and while it was not fully zeroed out, we are making major strides toward erasing this costly budget gimmick. The GEA reduction, along with an overall school aid increase of over \$1.4 billion, will mean more classroom resources to help students reach their full potential while reducing pressure on local taxes.

“At the same time, a great deal of time and energy was spent on the governor’s demand for education reforms. I rejected the governor’s agenda as proposed and worked to enact revisions that will reduce testing, place teacher evaluations in the hands of education experts, and promote continued excellence in our local schools.

“The budget will boost the property tax freeze rebate checks for homeowners, help create new jobs by investing in upstate economic revitalization, increase support for key agriculture programs, boost broadband support, step up assistance for college bound students, and protect our future by increasing funding for the Environmental Protection Fund and our parks.

“New ethic reform measures were also adopted to rightfully reaffirm the trust and faith people place in their elected officials.

“Overall, the fiscally responsible budget, which was adopted on time for a fifth consecutive year and stays within a two-percent spending cap, meets real needs, and provides a blueprint for a brighter future here in New York.”