



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

Senator Bonacic Announces Passage of the 2015-16 State Budget

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(Albany, NY)-New York State Senator John J. Bonacic (R/C/I – Mt. Hope) announced that the New York State Senate passed a \$142 billion 2015-16 State Budget which increases education funding by \$1.4 billion, invests in our infrastructure, and spurs economic growth.

For the fifth straight year, the 2015-16 State Budget keeps within a two-percent spending cap and rejects tax increases. Highlights of the 2015-16 State Budget include:

INCREASED AID TO EDUCATION:

- **\$1.4 Billion Increase in School Aid** which reflects an increase of hundreds of millions of dollars above what the Executive Budget originally proposed;
- **\$603 million in Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) cuts restored** and the Senate will continue to work towards the full elimination of the GEA once and for all;
- \$14.2 million in funding for teacher centers to enhance professional development; and
- Total state aid for education of \$23.5 billion will be distributed throughout the state.

INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE:

- \$1 billion in additional funds to repair and replace roads and bridges across the state. This is an increase of \$250 million from the Executive Budget proposal of \$750 million;
- \$488 million to support important local highway, road, and bridge repair projects, including \$438 million through the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS); and
- Local governments will be getting \$50 million to address this year's severe winter weather that resulted in a significant number of potholes and road surface damage.

PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- **Upstate economic revitalization projects will receive \$1.5 billion** across 7 regions to spur economic development and job growth;
- \$500 million to develop high-speed internet access; and

- \$50 million for the Southern Tier and Hudson Valley Farm Program.

MAKING HIGHER EDUCATION MORE AFFORDABLE:

- \$20 million increase for SUNY and CUNY community colleges by increasing full-time equivalent (FTE) funding by \$100. Base aid will be \$2,597 per FTE for the 2015-16 Fiscal Year;
- \$45 million increase in funding for Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), raising TAP funding over \$1 Billion; and
- Establishes a new merit scholarship program, with \$500 scholarships going to 5,000 eligible students.

"This budget shows that bi-partisan government finds compromise and addresses the issues New Yorkers care about most," said Senator Bonacic. "This will be the fifth year in a row the State will have a budget that stays within the two percent spending cap without raising taxes."

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