



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

Governor Cuomo, Majority Leader Flanagan And Speaker Heastie Announce Framework Of An Agreement On Major Priorities For End Of 2015-16 Legislative Session

John J. Flanagan

June 23, 2015



Earlier today, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan and Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie announced the framework of a three-way agreement on a number of priorities for the end of the 2015-16 legislative session.

The three-way agreement includes the following reforms and actions, among others:

Strengthening and Extending Rent Laws in New York City and Other Metropolitan Areas

The New York metropolitan region's rent laws will be extended for four years, and will be made retroactive to June 15, 2015. Further, additional reforms will be made to strengthen these laws, including:

- Increasing and indexing the high rent threshold to the applicable rent guidelines board (rent guidelines boards apply different rents to different geographic areas). This will make it more difficult for units to be removed from rent regulation because it will allow for the high rent watermark to float based on the rent guidelines board increases.
- Vacancy decontrol limits will be increased, and be indexed to the Rent Guidelines Board.
- Increasing civil harassment penalties. These provisions increase monetary penalties imposed on landlords who harass tenants by approximately \$1,000.

- Extends the Major Capital Improvement amortization period to reduce the overall increase to a tenant's rent.
- Limits the vacancy bonus provided to landlords on tenants who receive preferential rent as a way to stop the "drain" on these units.
- Putting the successful tenant protection unit into statute to ensure the unit remains permanent in protecting tenants.

Extending the Property Tax Cap and Cutting Taxes for Homeowners

The agreement extends the property tax cap for an additional four years. Since its enactment in 2011, the real property tax cap has dramatically reduced the growth in local property taxes. As compared with the 10 year period prior to 2011, the real property tax cap has reduced the rate of growth in local taxes by nearly 60 percent. As a result, the cap has saved the typical homeowner \$800 since its enactment. This savings is expected to increase to \$2,100 by 2017.

The agreement also includes \$1.3 billion in property tax cuts for homeowners.

Extending and Reforming 421-a

The agreement extends and reforms the 421-a program for four years to provide more affordable housing to residents in New York City and a Memorandum of Understanding will be required between the industry and trades.

Investing in Education

The agreement also includes major advancements in education policy, as well as assistance for both public and private schools in New York State. These include:

- Increased funding of \$250 million to reimburse private schools for the costs of performing State mandated services and the CAP program
- The Parental Empowerment Act which will require the disclosure of state exam questions and answers, the creation of a student content review committee by the State Education Department, and a review of growth model.
- An amendment on the cap on charter schools in New York City. This will allow 50 unissued and expired charters to be made available for new schools from the State Education Department or from the State University of New York; and
- A one-year extension of mayoral control of the New York City school system, subject to annual review and approval.

Building on Progress

The Governor and legislative leaders also recently reached agreements on two other significant packages of legislation – the first ensuring that private colleges in the state establish a uniform and comprehensive set of policies to protect students from sexual violence, and the second giving the state the authority to crack down on bad actors in the nail salon industry, while also establishing a new licensing program to help workers acquire new skills. Last week, the Governor and legislative leaders also reached an agreement on a bill to codify comprehensive reforms to overhaul the port authority of New York and New Jersey.

These reforms also build on the earlier accomplishments secured during the first half of the legislative session, including:

- Landmark education reforms and a \$1.3 billion increase in state education aid, bringing total state funding to \$23.5 billion – the highest in New York’s history;
- New ethics laws to deter, detect and punish breaches of the public trust, including the nation’s strongest disclosure requirements for outside income;
- \$5.4 billion investment in programs and initiatives to grow New York’s economy (such as the \$1.5 billion Upstate Revitalization Initiative, a \$1.3 billion investment in the New York State Thruway, and \$500 million to establish the New NY Broadband Program and ensure statewide high-speed broadband access by the end of 2018); and
- An economic mobility agenda that includes investments in affordable housing, student loan relief, MWBE support, and homeless and hunger assistance programs.