



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Successful Budget for New York

CATHARINE YOUNG April 1, 2014

**The 2014-2015 State Budget:**  
**Working Together to  
Give Everyone the  
Opportunity to Succeed**

I am thrilled with the successes of this year's new state budget, and wanted to give you an update on what we passed to cut taxes, grow jobs, and hold the line on state spending while making responsible investments in our future.

For the fourth straight year, working together, we passed an on-time budget that:

- **Provides significant relief for overburdened taxpayers;**
- **Grows jobs;**
- **Makes New York more welcoming for businesses, manufacturers, and farmers;**
- **Provides record funding for the education of our children;**

- **Reforms Common Core;**
- **Provides record funding for the repair of local roads and highways, including a special \$40 million fund to fix potholes;**
- **Supports access to quality health care; and**
- **Helps seniors and expands the vital Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) program.**

Here are some of the main highlights of the state budget that will affect you and your community:

### **Tax Cuts**

- \$3.4 billion for the STAR property tax relief program, a record amount, including \$905 million for the Enhanced STAR program for seniors.
- A \$1.5 billion property tax freeze providing direct relief for up to 2.8 million hardworking taxpayers over the next three years.

This property tax freeze, along with STAR, will provide relief to seniors, middle class families, and all property taxpayers in school districts and municipalities that take (or have already taken) steps to reduce costs and increase efficiencies. It will provide both immediate relief and encourage local governments to make changes that keep property taxes under control in the long run.

### **Growing Jobs and the Economy**

- \$501 million in new business tax reforms and simplifications.
- Complete elimination of the 5.9% corporate tax on manufacturers.
- Accelerated elimination of the 18-a energy tax surcharge that burdens both businesses and residential consumers.
- A real property tax credit for manufacturers.
- Increased funding for job training in key industries.

Our manufacturers and small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and their success has a direct impact on our communities. The common sense reforms and tax cuts we passed will directly help small businesses and manufacturers trying to compete, as well as families struggling to pay their bills. Restoring our economy and making New York a more welcoming place to do business requires cutting the taxes that stifle job creation, growth, and competitiveness, which is why I am so excited by the significant tax cuts we passed that will help businesses grow and create jobs.

### **Farmers and Agriculture**

- Millions of dollars of investment to preserve and strengthen our leading industry - agriculture.
- Reforms to New York's onerous estate tax, which makes it difficult and expensive for family farmers and small business owners to pass their family operations down to the next generation.
- A combination of loans, grants, and tax credits; tax cuts and reforms; and agricultural education initiatives that will help young aspiring farmers meet the challenges of high land, equipment, and utility costs, as well as burdensome taxes.

These reforms and investments will help preserve the future of small family farming in our state and ensure that we have a safe, fresh, healthy, and local food supply.

### **Record Education Funding**

- Over \$578.5 million of aid for schools in my Senate district, a record high.
- Statewide, we increased school aid by \$1.1 billion, or 5.3%, over last year, bringing total school aid to over \$22 billion overall, the highest funding per pupil in the entire country. Nearly 70% of this aid will go to high-needs districts.

The education aid increases in our area were higher than the state average and a tremendous victory for our children and property taxpayers. We also took a major step forward in completely erasing the harmful Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA). This fiscal gimmick, which takes funding from our schools to fund other state spending, was imposed by Senate Democrats in 2010 when they controlled all of state government, despite the vigorous opposition of every Senate Republican at the time and ever since. I am committed to the complete elimination of the GEA as soon as possible.

## **Common Core Reforms**

- Ban on standardized testing for students in Pre-K through 2nd grade.
- Ban on including state assessment test results for 3rd through 8th graders in a student's permanent record.
- Limits to the amount of time that classes can spend on standardized testing and test preparation.
- Student privacy protections and the creation of a "Parents Bill of Rights" to ensure data privacy and security, and the primacy of parental rights when it comes to their child's education.

I have heard from countless parents concerned about Common Core. These important changes take significant steps to alleviate the stress of students, parents, and teachers, and help protect our children from harmful testing and privacy violations.

## **Pothole and Road Repairs**

- Record funding of \$438 million for the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) that helps local governments afford much needed road maintenance and repairs.
- A new \$40 million "Extreme Weather Assistance" pothole fund specifically aimed at helping municipalities fix the potholes that have resulted from this winter's harsh weather.

## **Health**

- Support for our local hospitals and nursing homes, ensuring the availability of reliable and nearby care, especially for emergency treatment.
- Safeguards to protect consumers from unexpected and costly "surprise" out-of-network medical bills.
- Significant funding for early intervention (EI) programs that offer important services to infants and toddlers with disabilities.

## **Seniors**

- EPIC is expanded to help up to 25,000 more seniors afford their prescription drugs. Income eligibility requirements are increased from \$35,000 to \$75,000 for single seniors, and from \$50,000 to \$100,000 for married seniors.
  - \$5 million increase in funding for community services for the elderly, such as transportation assistance, respite care, and meals-on-wheels.
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With this year's state budget, we are continuing in our mission to restore our state and empower our citizens to succeed right here in New York so they don't have to leave in search of opportunities elsewhere.

Making our state a better and more affordable place to live, work, and do business is essential to reversing the damage that was done back in 2009-10 when New York City controlled all of state government. They hiked 126 taxes by over \$14 billion, ran up a \$10 billion deficit, and set our economy way back. Undoing the damage and recovering from those irresponsible policies has been my focus and mission ever since.

This budget's focus on tax relief and economic growth is extremely positive and by supporting tax cuts and good-paying jobs for families, and career opportunities for our young people, we have taken major steps towards restoring our state and strengthening our economy.

For more detailed information on this year's state budget, please visit:

**[www.nysenate.gov/GetTheBudgetFacts](http://www.nysenate.gov/GetTheBudgetFacts)**

I look forward to providing you with more information in the coming days and weeks on how the new state budget affects you and your family.

Please accept my best wishes and never hesitate to contact me if I can ever be of assistance.

Warmest regards,

Senator Cathy Young