



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

## Your Feedback Is Needed

DAVID J. VALESKY April 11, 2014

As we proceed through budget negotiations and the Legislative Session, I am interested to know your opinion on a number of issues that are being discussed. I recently mailed a survey to my constituents asking about full-day pre-kindergarten, medical marijuana, the estate tax, campaign finance reform, and more. If you have already returned the survey, I appreciate your feedback. If not, please mail it back at your earliest convenience, or fill out the survey on [my website](#). Thank you.

### **Women's History Month Exhibit**

The New York State Senate sponsors a Women of Distinction exhibit to recognize the historic contributions of New Yorkers in celebration of National Women's History Month, observed each March. This year, St. Marianne Cope, founder of St. Joseph's Hospital in Syracuse, is being inducted. If you can, I urge you to visit the exhibit, on display from now through March 28 in the Legislative Office Building in Albany and [online](#), to learn about suffragists, geneticists, labor organizers, entertainers, and others whose contributions stand as inspirations to the next generation of women.

### **Survey Says: Syracuse Ranks 20th in Affordability**

Forbes recently ranked the Syracuse metro area (which includes Onondaga, Oswego, and Madison counties) as 20th on a list of the 21 most affordable U.S. cities. Forbes looked at the

100 largest metropolitan areas with populations of 600,000 or more. Then cities were ranked by housing affordability and the cost of living, which factored in things such as the cost of food, utilities, gas, transportation, medical expenses and other items. For the full article, visit the [Forbes website](#).

### **Learn About Financial Aid at the Online Student Lending Resource Center**

The Department of Financial Services (DFS) has launched a website that includes a [Student Lending Resource Center](#) with tips, advice, and other information to help students make smart, long-term financial choices when financing their educations.

The Resource Center offers information for students entering college, their parents, and graduates paying their loans. It includes tips about the types of financial aid that are available (including the differences between government and private loans), what to do if a student falls behind on payments or ends up in default, how to avoid unnecessary or unfair fees when opening a bank account at school, the tax credits and deductions available for education expenses, and other advice to help New Yorkers navigate the financial decisions surrounding paying for college.

### **Maple Weekend Events Coming Up**

Maple Weekend, an annual event sponsored the New York State Maple Producers Association, will take place the weekends of March 22-23 and March 29-30, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day at more than 100 locations statewide. Maple producers will show visitors how maple syrup is produced in sugarhouses, going through the process from tree to table, explaining everything from tubing systems to the evaporation process. Depending on the location, pancake breakfasts may be available, as will treats such as maple cotton candy, maple popcorn, and maple sugar candy. Admission is free to all Maple Weekend events. To find a Maple Weekend event near you, visit [www.mapleweekend.com](http://www.mapleweekend.com).