



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

Senator Serino Responds to the Governor's State of the State Address

SUSAN SERINO January 13, 2016

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SERINO: THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAILS

Responds to Governor's State of the State

ALBANY, NY—Senator Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park) released the following statement in response to the Governor's State of the State Address (SOS):

“I agree that we need to think big if we want to see real change. However, the devil’s in the details and while many of the Governor’s proposals sound good in theory, we need to go through them with a fine tooth comb to ensure that taxpayers are truly getting the relief they deserve.

Last year, the Governor’s SOS emphasized making economic growth and development a priority and it seems he is continuing that trend this year. While I appreciate that goal, the proposals need to translate to jobs and relief for taxpayers.

I was encouraged to hear his emphasis on investing in our ailing roads, bridges and wastewater infrastructure—a measure I called for just last month. However, I was disappointed to hear that his plan does not include parity in the investment between upstate and downstate infrastructure—in fact he dedicates \$4 billion less to Upstate roads and bridges than he does to the MTA. With the right investment, the Hudson Valley has the potential to be an economic driver for our state as a whole and we will not sit back quietly while we are being shortchanged to pay for the MTA.

We need to go beyond rhetoric on education reform. Every New York student deserves a quality education and that means closing the GEA, empowering high quality teachers, restoring parent’s trust in the education system, repealing Common Core once and for all, and implementing challenging standards that will prepare our children for the ever-evolving global economy.

We need to ensure that we have well-paying jobs available in our local communities, as well as a well-prepared workforce ready to take them on. That means cutting through the red-tape, eliminating excessive regulations, empowering small businesses, investing in projects that create jobs, and investing in vocational training.

We need to ensure that our seniors can afford to live out their Golden years right here in our community, independently and free from abuse. As the Chair of the Senate’s Aging Committee, I was disappointed to see a lack of innovative ideas for improving quality of life for New York seniors. Making New York affordable for retirees and ensuring that seniors have the resources they need to enjoy the New York communities they spent their lives building is one of my highest priorities. The enacted budget needs to send a strong message to our seniors that they are valued here in our community.

Hailing from the Hudson Valley, where almost everyone knows someone suffering from Lyme Disease, I know that combating its spread needs to remain one of our highest priorities. Last year I secured an unprecedented \$600,000 for Lyme Disease research and this year’s budget must reflect a commitment to eradicating this debilitating disease.

In the Hudson Valley our natural resources and our historic sites draw visitors from all over the world, so I was also encouraged to see the significant boost in his proposal to increase funding for the Environmental Protection Fund and his emphasis on bolstering tourism. However, in citing areas to concentrate on, the Hudson Valley was noticeably absent. I will be fighting for funds to increase tourism and protect the environment in our backyard.

Restoring the public's trust needs to be one of our highest priorities throughout the 2016 Legislative Session. We need to strive for greater transparency in government and we need harsher punishments for elected officials that violate the public's trust. With eight new members in the Senate Majority alone, we are poised to champion real change. The Senate has already passed term limits for leadership positions and advocated for the removal of pensions for officials convicted of a felony. The NYS Assembly needs to take action this year.

Last year, I promised to ensure the State Budget delivered for our local community. I made good on that promise ensuring the extension of the property tax cap, significantly increasing education aid, providing \$3.2 billion to fund STAR and Enhanced STAR, delivering nearly \$5 million for Mental Health services to Dutchess County and to hold the line on local taxes, almost \$200,000 for local veterans, \$75,000 to combat domestic violence in our community and more. But there is still work to be done and I will carry on that fight this year and ensure that the NYS Budget makes the Hudson Valley a priority and delivers for our local community."

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