



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael H. Ranzenhofer

Process of Reviewing Details of Executive Budget Proposal Begins

MICHAEL H. RANZENHOFER January 20, 2016

| ISSUE: **INFRASTRUCTURE, GAP ELIMINATION ADJUSTMENT (GEA), SMALL BUSINESS, STATE BUDGET**

Look for...

Senator Mike Ranzenhofer's
Monthly Column

...In your local newspaper
the third week of every month

Senator Ranzenhofer's column appeared in the Amherst and Clarence Bees on January 20th. Governor Andrew Cuomo unveiled his Executive Budget last week during a two-hour State of the State address.

He advocated for his fiscal plan, including many new spending initiatives, in broad strokes. A \$3 billion project renovating Penn Station and a \$1 billion Manhattan Convention Center expansion were some of the big-ticket items advanced during the presentation.

Overall, the Governor recommended an increase in spending by \$2.46 billion. For the past five years, the state budget has limited spending growth to below two percent, saving taxpayers \$23 billion. This fiscally responsible practice should continue for this year's budget.

As the Governor outlined the Executive Budget proposal, he was somewhat vague on how to pay for the entire financial plan. My Senate colleagues and I will start the process of breaking down the numbers soon. It is so important to review all of the financial details, as well as figure out exactly how many state tax dollars should be allocated.

He also shared ideas on a variety of legislative issues, including infrastructure investments, help for small businesses and education funding.

The Governor talked about infrastructure improvements for Upstate New York. I will be taking a closer look to ensure Upstate receives an equal amount of funding as downstate's Metropolitan Transportation Authority did last year. As I have said in the past, our crumbling roads and bridges have been put on the back burner for too long.

Another proposal would provide as much as \$300 million in tax relief for small businesses.

While I am encouraged by the emphasis on tax relief, it does not go far enough to really help the private sector.

His proposal should serve as a starting point. It should be supplemented by eliminating burdensome, outdated regulations. Since 2011, we have made strides to help smaller employers, but there is still a lot of work to be done— in an effort to make it easier to run a business and create jobs in New York State.

For education funding, he outlined a phase-out of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) budget cuts over a period of two years. I have been strongly advocating to get rid of the GEA for years now. We must eliminate the GEA this year.

The time is overdue to end the GEA's devastating impact on funding for our schools.

Abolishing the GEA will finally restore millions of dollars in state aid to our schools and build a better future for our children.

Finally, our budget priorities should be passing an on-time budget, for the sixth consecutive year, which keeps our strong economy growing, rejects any new taxes and controls spending.

I look forward to listening to feedback from Western New Yorkers. I will be sure to keep you posted on important budget developments.