



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Work on State Budget Underway in Albany

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- [State budget](#)



Earlier this month, Governor Cuomo delivered his annual State of the State Address and budget presentation, an ambitious outline of his goals and spending priorities for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Now that we have his detailed proposal in hand, the Legislature will take the next couple of months to perform perhaps our most important job, enacting a final budget that controls the size and cost of government, encourages economic development and job creation and provides necessary services for our residents.

Working with my colleagues in the Senate and Assembly, I am confident we will craft a better budget, which controls taxes and ensures the state lives within its means. Budget hearings and a line by line review of the governor's proposal have already begun with the intention of adopting an on time budget for the sixth consecutive year.

Since taking office in 2011, I have worked hard to limit spending and to abolish burdensome and outdated regulations that drive up the cost of doing business and stifle job creation. We must continue to practice fiscal responsibility and continue to limit spending. To that end, I call on the Assembly and the governor to follow the Senate's lead in passing a permanent state spending cap. As we have seen over the past several years, the cap is one of the most effective tools in preventing the state from overspending.

The state must also invest in our children's future by providing adequate resources for our public schools. This starts by putting an end to the Gap Elimination Adjustment, or GEA, which has put great financial stress on our schools for too long. This budget scheme dates back to 2010 and must be eliminated this year and we have to ensure school aid is distributed fairly so that all kids have the resources they need to learn and thrive.

We also have a responsibility to invest in the state's infrastructure and ensure parity for road and bridge projects across Western New York and the Upstate region. Rebuilding our infrastructure will not only create badly needed jobs, it will keep our economy moving forward by making sure our roads are safe and efficient for both public and commercial traffic. We have made great progress in recent years, but there is more work to be done. I will do my best to ensure our region receives its fair share of the funding.

In the end, we must adopt a budget that allows hard working New Yorkers to keep more of their money and provides the relief that taxpayers across the state need. The Legislature must also work hard to restore the public trust by insisting that all elected representatives conduct their business in an honorable and trustworthy way. It's what our residents expect and deserve.

I promise to keep you posted on our progress.