



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Senate Democrats: Budget Should Help Working Families AND Restore Public Trust In Government

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Albany, NY - The Senate Democratic Conference today released its priorities for the 2015-2016 State Budget in a letter sent to Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan. These requests include fiscal proposals as well as policy initiatives that the Senate Democrats have pushed for, but have been blocked by the Senate Republican Majority from enacting into law.

The Senate Democrats' policy priorities include passing paid family leave, raising the minimum wage, enacting meaningful ethics reforms. Additionally, the conference's fiscal requests include lowering the tax burden on New York families, end the Gap Elimination Adjustment, increasing aid to local governments and small businesses, and ensuring that the state pays its fair share of Medicaid and higher education costs.

"The State Budget provides us with an opportunity to not only improve the economy, help small businesses and put more New Yorkers back to work, it also gives state government a chance to enact major policies that have stalled for too long," Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said. "New Yorkers have demanded paid family leave, a higher minimum wage and meaningful ethics reforms, yet those calls have fallen on deaf ears. That is why the Senate Democrats have advanced these initiatives among our budget priorities, and I urge the Republican Majority to include them in the Senate Budget Resolution."

The Senate Democratic Conference budget requests were generated following the conclusion of the Joint Legislative Budget Hearings on the Executive Budget and will address the concerns and priorities of the stakeholders who testified at these hearings. These Senate Democratic proposals are also intended to address the concerns of millions of New Yorkers who have had their voices silenced by a lack of action in the State Senate on critical, widely-supported initiatives.

Senate Democratic Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris said, “Senate Republicans refuse to take action on important issues like paid family leave, a minimum wage hike and meaningful ethics reform. That is why these proposals must be added to the State Budget to ensure they are finally enacted. Senate Democratic priorities will improve the lives of millions of New Yorkers and help build a stronger, more prosperous state. It is time for the Senate Republicans to step up and stop playing politics with people's lives.”

Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Liz Krueger said, “New Yorkers expect bold action to clean up government and improve the lives of hard working families, without making drastic cuts to vital programs. This year’s budget should include common sense policies that will help lift up all New Yorkers -- a minimum wage you can live on, paid family leave so you can care for your loved ones, and real ethics reform so you can trust your government. At the same time, we must not balance the budget on the backs of the most vulnerable. Cuts to CUNY, Medicaid, and childcare support must be reversed before a final budget is passed.”

The budget requests and priorities outlined by the Senate Democratic Conference will improve the economy, reduce the tax burden on hard working New Yorkers and help build a fairer and more prosperous state. To review the Senate Democratic Conference’s budget priorities letter, please visit: <https://www.scribd.com/doc/303172137/Senate-Democratic-Conference-Budget-Letter-FY-2016-17>