



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Statement on 2016-17 State Budget

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ALBANY, 04/01/16 -- State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) today commented on the 2016-17 state budget:

“Record education funding, a significant middle-class tax cut, crucial resources for upstate infrastructure, and support to combat the heroin crisis are among the highlights of the new state budget.

“Local schools will have more resources than ever before to help students reach their full potential while, at the same time, keeping property taxes in check. The nightmarish Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) has been put to bed once and for all, and foundation aid received a major increase. In total, education aid is up by \$1.5 billion.

“People will keep more of their hard-earned money through a \$1 billion middle-class tax cut in the first year, which reaches \$4.2 billion when fully implemented. Small business owners who file under the Personal Income Tax (PIT) will also see major relief.

“Upstate roads and bridges will be treated on par with New York City transportation with \$27 billion committed to improvements over the next six years. This is a key element that will help spur our local economy and improve safety on our highways.

“As a member of the Senate Heroin Task Force, I also advanced recommendations, derived in part from a special hearing in my district, to continue the fight against heroin. A total of \$166 million is included in the budget, including \$25 million for treatment and recovery services to help those caught in the throes of drug addiction.

“The budget also includes a minimum wage increase that was subject to a great deal of scrutiny. I rejected the governor’s proposal and worked to reach an agreement that is fair to employers and employees and does not harm our tenuous upstate economy. The phased-in plan, which includes additional reviews and stopgaps, is an attempt to strike that balance. The plan also suspends the governor’s power to convene industry specific wage boards that would have allowed him to enact his plan without legislative approval.

“Overall, the state budget meets the diverse needs of our state, exhibits fiscal restraint by staying within a two-percent spending cap, and provides a strong foundation for continued economic growth.”