



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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IDC: New York State budget will create a 'Better New York'

JEFFREY D. KLEIN March 31, 2016

| ISSUE: **PAID FAMILY LEAVE, MINIMUM WAGE, INCOME TAX, CHILD CARE, EDUCATION**

Paid Family Leave, \$15 minimum wage, and major \$1 billion tax relief package for middle-class among victories for New Yorkers

ALBANY, NY - Independent Democratic Conference Leader Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) and members of the IDC on Thursday applauded the agreement on New York's sixth on-time budget which advances key policy issues from the IDC's agenda, *NY 2020: A Blueprint for a Better New York*.

From the outset, members of the IDC advocated their robust four-year agenda to uplift New Yorkers in every corner of the state with a focus on education, housing, employment and overall quality-of-life.

This year's budget includes signature issues to improve the lives of working- and middle-class New Yorkers like Paid Family Leave, which grants the workforce 12-weeks off to bond with a new child or care for a sick loved one and a \$15 minimum wage, which will first go into effect in New York City. The budget also delivers a \$1 billion tax relief package for the middle-class.

"This truly is The Year of the Worker. A victory in the Fight for \$15 and Paid Family Leave will make a tremendous difference in the lives of our workforce. New York State put together the

best Paid Family Leave policy in the nation. Nobody will ever have to choose between what their heart tells them to do and what their bank account allows them to do. Our minimum wage workforce also get a raise and our middle-class households receive over \$1 billion in tax relief. This is a budget that should make every New Yorker proud. I thank Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie and Governor Andrew Cuomo for their leadership,” **said Senator Klein.**

“This year’s budget brings new resources to education and transportation for upstate New Yorkers. For too long upstate students have suffered because of the Gap Elimination Adjustment. This budget finally remedies this serious problem by eliminating the GEA and restoring \$434 million in aid to our schools. We also create parity in upstate road and bridge funding with a \$27 billion investment that will transform crumbling and dangerous infrastructure. This budget will usher in truly historic investments in upstate New York,” **said IDC Deputy Leader David Valesky (D-Oneida).**

“Before I was elected to office, I was a union member and a caseworker for child welfare, and this budget is truly an achievement for New York’s working families. This year, I was proud to fight for facilitated enrollment, paid family leave and a \$15 minimum wage, and we have won each of those fights. We will continue the Facilitated Enrollment Program that has allowed so many parents to continue to work while accessing safe and affordable child care, give our workers the raise that they deserve, and implement the best Paid Family Leave program in the country. By passing this budget, New York is leading the way for our working families,” **said Senator Diane Savino (D-SI/Brooklyn).**

“This year marks the largest education investment in the history of New York. We will fully restore \$434 million in funding to our schools by eliminating the Gap Elimination Adjustment that has shortchanged our children, and increase Foundation Aid funding to \$627 million for our school districts that need it most. In addition, we will freeze tolls on the

Tappan Zee bridge and the Thruway, with a total of \$700 million in new funding. This budget represents a leap forward for New York and I am proud to vote in favor,” **said Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester).**

“This budget truly protects New Yorkers. As the Vice-Chair of the Environmental Conservation Committee, I am thrilled that this year we will invest a record \$300 million in the state Environmental Protection Fund. I have also been a champion for middle-class homeowners, and this budget will bring major relief through a historic tax relief program of over \$1 billion. Whether it’s keeping our water clean or putting money back in the pockets of our middle-class, I am proud to support this year’s budget,” **said Senator Tony Avella (D-Queens).**

The 2016 budget will include:

- **Paid Family Leave** ensures that New York’s families can afford to take needed time to welcome a child into the world or care for a sick loved one. Under the new law, employees will be granted 12-weeks of Paid Family Leave while receiving up to two-thirds of their regular pay. Through a phase-in over four years, New York State will implement the best paid family leave program in the country
- **A \$15 Minimum Wage** puts money back in the pockets of New York’s working class. By introducing a raise in wages over three years for New York City, New York will be the first state in the nation to reach \$15 by 2019.
- **A major \$1 billion tax relief package for the middle-class** significantly reduces the taxes of millions of New Yorkers. The package aims to cut personal income taxes for households earning between \$26,000 and \$300,000. These tax cuts will bring meaningful relief to the middle-class, while encouraging financial spending and growth throughout the state.

- **A \$434 million investment to eliminate the Gap Elimination Adjustment** remedies the long-standing problem of subtracting funding from schools to make up for budget shortfalls which have devastated school districts upstate. By finally eliminating this problem, this year's budget brings fair funding to all of New York's school districts.
- **A record level of funding for transportation infrastructure** reinvigorates all of New York's transportation needs both upstate and downstate. An investment of \$27 billion in the Department of Transportation and \$27 billion in the Metropolitan Transit Authority inject much-needed funding while ensuring that New York's transit projects move forward.
- **Continuing the Facilitated Enrollment Program** ensures that safe, quality childcare will be a reality for more New Yorkers. New York is one of the most expensive states in the nation for child care, and for many women that means having to choose between their careers or child-rearing. The Facilitated Enrollment Program provides low-cost child care to working women and men, while also offering parenting resources.
- **The largest education investment in state history** ensures that we build up our children's future as we build up New York State. The state will invest over \$175 million in the community schools model, which ties neighbors, teachers, administrators and volunteers together, to convert struggling schools to this successful model across the state. To address diversity in New York City's elite Specialized High Schools, \$2 million will be invested to establish outreach coordinators for every school, to ensure that students from underrepresented areas are given the resources they need. The funding will also build test prep programs in each school, to serve as a pipeline for students in need of support.

- **An investment of \$1.9 billion in housing** addresses housing needs throughout New York State.
- **A record \$300 million investment in the Environmental Protection Fund** enhances New York's parks, keep the state's water sources clean and protect the environment for all.
- **A four-year extension of the Senior Citizens and Disabled Rent Increase Exemption** will keep the successful rent freeze program, which keeps senior citizens and disabled residents in their own homes, at the much-needed income threshold of \$59,000. It will extend it for an additional four years, ensuring that the vulnerable New Yorkers who depend on this program will be able to afford their rent.