



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

Senator Serrano Applauds Historic Minimum Wage, Paid Family Leave and Parks Funding in This Year's Budget

JOSE M. SERRANO April 4, 2016

| ISSUE: **PAID FAMILY LEAVE, MINIMUM WAGE, STATE BUDGET, ENVIRONMENT**

"Last week, after many long days of negotiations, we in the state legislature passed the \$155.6 billion state budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Within this spending plan are many initiatives that will benefit the people of the 29th Senate District, as well as all New Yorkers across our state.

I am so proud that we've finally enacted a progressive \$15 minimum wage to help lift so many hard working New Yorkers out of poverty. This is a major boost for our often-exploited low wage workers, while providing real economic benefits for our neighborhoods. I am also pleased that we passed a comprehensive Paid Family Leave Program that will allow individuals to take time off from work in order to care for a newborn baby or a sick family member. The days of choosing between missing work to care for a loved one and missing a paycheck are over.

In addition to the victories we secured for working families, as the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks & Recreation, I was very proud of our fight for parks and environmental programs. The Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), which provides vital funding for open space conservation and municipal parks across our state, will be funded at \$300 million for the first time since its inception. We also included

\$90 million of much needed capital funding to improve and revitalize the infrastructure at state parks. In addition, the budget allocates \$500,000 in grants to groups that work day in and day out to help maintain and beautify our parks.

This is a snapshot of some of the many benefits within this year's spending plan. I am proud of the historic initiatives included in this year's budget, but there is still much work to be done, especially in the areas of ethics reform, campaign finance reform, and the DREAM Act. Our work in Albany is far from over, and I remain hopeful that we will be able to build upon the successes of this budget to enact additional progressive legislation that will benefit all New Yorkers."