



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael H. Ranzenhofer

Working to Help Western New York Families & Protect Our Communities

SENATOR MICHAEL H. RANZENHOFER May 17, 2017

| ISSUE: **COMBATING HEROIN AND OPIOID ADDICTION, LIBRARY FUNDING, AGRICULTURE**

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Senator Ranzenhofer's column appeared in the Amherst and Clarence Bees on May 17th

As your State Senator, I have been working to help Western New York families and protect our communities. New tools to combat the heroin and opioid crisis, strengthening agriculture and financial support for local libraries will help to accomplish these goals.

The heroin and opioid crisis has had a devastating impact on communities all across Western New York, leaving a trail of heartbroken families and individuals in its wake. I have hosted two community forums– at Williamsville South High School in 2016 and at Batavia City Hall in 2015– of the Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction.

This year, I helped secure \$214 million to strengthen prevention, treatment, recovery and education services. This new funding will provide law enforcement, health professionals and mental health experts with the tools they need to combat this crisis. These new tools will help to save lives.

I will continue to work to develop real, lasting solutions that can provide hope, help break the cycle of addiction and end this epidemic.

Another initiative will help New York State's number one industry, agriculture. Our agricultural economy is comprised of 35,000 farms supporting a workforce that is over 100,000 strong.

As you may know, Governor Cuomo proposed cutting funding to several agriculture programs as part of his Executive Budget proposal. I heard from many residents expressing their opposition, and I opposed these cuts, too.

I successfully advocated and delivered a total of \$51 million, \$10 million above the Executive proposal, for important agriculture programs, including the Farm Viability Institute, Future Farmers of America and Agribusiness Child Development.

These programs invest in cutting-edge research to support the next generation of family farmers. Investing in agriculture will help strengthen a major economic driver of our state economy and a backbone of our local community, while ensuring more healthy, fresh fruits and vegetables at our dinner tables.

Lastly, our local public libraries play an important role as centers of learning, culture and much more. Many libraries provide residents with internet access, employment resources and public spaces for meetings.

That is why I am pleased to announce that more financial support is on the way for public libraries. I voted in favor of \$95 million in funding for libraries, as well as \$24 million in capital funding for improvement projects and facility upgrades.

Simply put, our libraries provide important services. This financial support will help to enhance those services and ensure our local public libraries continue to be invaluable assets to our community.

These new initiatives, recently enacted into law, will make a positive difference in our community. As your State Senator, you can always count on me to help Western New York families and protect our communities.