



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Statement From Senator Patty Ritchie

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Unfortunately, the 2019-2020 New York State budget confirms some of our biggest fears when it comes to the direction of our state. This new spending plan does nothing to address the needs of the upstate economy, the outward-migration of families or the suffering rural communities that make up the bulk of our state.

Instead, the budget includes a mish-mash of progressive policies aimed at improving life for those downstate, as well as billions of dollars in new taxes and spending that will make it harder for New Yorkers to make ends meet. The real winners in this budget are criminals—who will be afforded a series of new benefits as a result of the new spending plan—and politicians, who will reap the benefits of a new, political welfare state.

Simply put, rather than addressing our state's affordability crisis or providing middle-class New Yorkers with sorely needed tax relief, we are getting a spending plan that only makes things worse in the following ways:

New taxes

- A new grocery bag tax that will require anyone needing food or other necessities to dig a little deeper into their pockets
- A new tax on prescription drugs
- A new tax on internet purchases
- A new tax on real estate transfers
- A new energy tax
- A new commuter tax
- More mandates to drive up local taxes
- In total, the new budget includes \$1.4 billion in new taxes this year, and \$4.6 billion in new taxes next year

Misplaced Priorities

- Disproportionately underfunds school aid, with a far greater amount of support aimed at New York City schools—including a \$12 million line item specifically to Yonkers—effectively shortchanging every other area of the state
- Cuts state aid to localities by linking \$59 million of Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) funding to local sales tax revenue

- Eliminates \$65 million in CHIPS funding for the Extreme Winter Recovery Program
- Cuts \$20 million in library construction grants
- Eliminates funding for critical access hospitals that serve rural communities
- Eliminates \$5 million in capital funding for county fairs and \$5 million for animal shelters
- Eliminates funding to combat EEE and cuts funding for rabies prevention in half
- Eliminates \$1 million in funding for Lyme Disease research and awareness funding
- Provides \$27 million in funding to provide free education for illegal immigrants

Criminals' Bill of Rights

- Provides for the closure of up to three correctional facilities
- Approximately 90 percent of those arrested for crimes will be released without posting bail
- New changes that will make it more difficult for police officers to do their jobs
- Prevents public access to mug shots

Welfare for Politicians

- Establishes a system where taxpayers will now fund political campaigns
- \$100 million in taxpayer funds set aside to pay for robo-calls, mailers, and TV commercials instead of school aid and healthcare

Over the last eight years, New York State has proven it is possible to invest in our schools, infrastructure, key industries and more—without increasing spending and raising taxes. The new state budget, crafted by downstate Democrats, proves Albany's priorities are misplaced and shows a true disregard for the real needs of hardworking New Yorkers.