



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Benjamin

After the passage of New York State's budget, Senator Brian A. Benjamin, Chair of the Senate Committee on Budget & Revenues, issued the following statement:

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| ISSUE: **2019-20 BUDGET**

Late Sunday night, I presided over the passage of New York State's \$175.5 billion budget, the first budget since Democrats have taken control of the State Senate. It includes \$1 billion for schools (a record increase); congestion pricing to create a dedicated funding stream to fix the subway systems that so many of my neighbors rely on to get to work, school, and worship; and millions of dollars in funding coming directly to not-for-profits and services in the district I represent.

We have also taken a step towards ending mass incarceration as we know it in New York State by ending cash bail for all non-violent crimes, so that, in approximately 90% of cases, access to money will not determine if an accused New Yorker goes free or is sent to a jail like Rikers Island. We also reformed our discovery system to even out the playing field in the courtroom, and have ensured every New Yorker has their constitutionally guaranteed right to a speedy trial with new requirements that misdemeanors be dealt with in 90 days and felonies in 180. I campaigned on a promise to reform our broken criminal justice system, and I worked with my colleagues to deliver on that promise for you in this budget.

This is what our majority looks like—our budget can finally begin to reflect our priorities. A fairer New York that does not criminalize poverty and that invests in education, transportation, and our communities.

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