



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Senator Harckham/Senate Majority Pass Final 2019 NYS Budget Reflecting Hudson Valley Values

PETE HARCKHAM April 8, 2019

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(Albany, NY) Senator Pete Harckham, 40th Senate District, Chair of the Senate Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Committee, and the Senate Majority Conference passed the final New York State 2019 budget that includes a significant increase in financial support for New York schools, a permanent property tax cap to help overburdened taxpayers and restored funding to the state's municipalities to help hold the line on local property taxes.

The series of bills also contained groundbreaking new rules governing substance abuse treatment, restoration of the Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer to Peer Program, and a ban on single use plastic bags, among other measures. The budget also restored over \$500M in cuts to hospitals, nursing homes and home healthcare programs.

“I’m proud to have fought for a budget that reflects Hudson Valley values. We won a \$1 billion increase in school aid in the final budget. The largest percentage increase in the state, \$3 million, went to the Ossining School District and a \$2.5 million increase went to Peekskill,” said Senator Pete Harckham, 40th Senate District. “We fully restored \$60 million in AIM funding to our municipalities and passed a permanent 2 percent property tax cap to help overburdened taxpayers. We’re protecting our veterans, investing \$500 million in clean water infrastructure, banning single use plastic bags and maintaining the high quality of our healthcare system. While no budget is ever perfect, we closed a \$2B shortfall and were able to invest in key priority areas and stay within the 2% spending growth cap.”

### **Property Tax Relief**

The budget includes a permanent 2 percent property tax cap. This will save property taxpayers almost \$190 billion dollars over the next decade.

The budget provides for the full restoration of State Aid to Municipalities (AIM) of \$60 million. AIM funding will help keep local property taxes within the tax cap.

Implementation of an Internet sales tax will provide our counties with \$100M in additional revenue to help prevent further property tax increases and to continue to provide essential services. The Internet sales tax will also help our main streets by putting our brick and mortar stores on an even playing field against online retailers who have been tax exempt for too long.

## **School Funding**

The Senate Majority secured a \$1 billion dollar increase in School Aid, \$100M more than last year's School Aid increase, including a \$618 million increase in Foundation Aid, \$280 million more than in the proposed Executive budget.

Senate District 40 received \$391,678,829 in school aid funding, an increase of \$10,492,861 from last year's level.

The largest percentage increase in the state went to the Ossining School District (\$3 million) and a substantial \$2.5 million increase went to Peekskill, two school districts that have been underfunded for too long.

\$150K went to Special Olympics Unified Schools Program, which is designed to promote inclusiveness, inspire youth leadership and encourage whole school engagement by using sports and competition to provide opportunities for students with and without intellectual disabilities to compete alongside one another. Brewster School District is one of the districts that participates in this transformative program.

## **Substance Abuse Treatment**

\$100M in funding is going to the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) for opioid treatment, recovery, prevention and education services.

The budget doubles the minimum number of days of in-patient substance use disorder treatment, from 14 to 28, before a concurrent review by insurance companies. This groundbreaking change will ensure that people struggling with addiction have insurance coverage for in-patient treatment for at least 28 days. The Governor had proposed an increase to 21 days, and at Senator Harckham's recommendation, the Senate budget resolution increased that time frame to 28 days.

The budget reduces the number of co-pays that someone in substance abuse outpatient care must pay. Currently, people with substance abuse issues in outpatient treatment are often hit with multiple co-pays for each visit based on the number of different doctors or providers they meet with during that visit. For example, during a single outpatient visit, the patient may see a general physician, a social worker and a psychiatrist. The new budget ensures that people in outpatient care for substance abuse will be paying only a single co-pay per visit.

To better serve people in need of treatment for substance use disorder, this budget eliminates duplicative license requirements allowing for integrated care for patients. This budget also seeks to attract and retain employees in this field by providing for a cost of living adjustment, and a loan forgiveness and scholarship program.

### **Veterans**

Fully restores \$3.735 million for the Joseph Dwyer Peer to Peer program (\$185K each for District 40's three counties). This program is crucial for veterans from the standpoint of suicide and substance abuse prevention, and helps veterans who are facing the challenges of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

### **Environment & Energy**

Bans single use plastic bags and empowers counties and cities to opt into a 5-cent fee on paper bags, with 40 percent of the generated revenue going to local efforts to provide reusable bags for low and fixed-income consumers, and 60 percent of the generated revenue going to the State's Environmental Protection Fund.

Establishes the Westchester County renewable and energy efficiency resources program which provides \$250 million for local investment in clean energy alternatives to natural gas.

The budget includes an investment of \$500 million for clean water infrastructure. This builds on our already historic \$2.5 billion investment. The budget also includes an investment of \$300 million for the Environmental Protection Fund, the highest level of funding in the program's history. This vital funding stream protects our open space, nature preserves and waterfronts.

The budget establishes the Food Scraps Recycling Program requiring large producers of food waste to donate leftover food & recycle food scraps to feed hungry New Yorkers and to keep wasted food out of landfills.

### **Funding for Hudson Valley Items**

Provides for \$925,000 for New York Medical College's Center of Excellence program. The Center of Excellence, located in Valhalla, provides expertise in disaster medicine and medical countermeasures and works with partners in New York State to increase the capacity of first responders, hospitals, and health care systems to respond to disasters, acts of terrorism and public health emergencies.

Supports services to constituents through funding the Boys and Girls Club of Northern Westchester and the United Way's 211 program. Both are prime examples of a public/private partnership that provides linkage to vital services and saves taxpayer money. Boys and Girls Club: \$750,000 for services and expenses of New York State Alliance of Boys and Girls Club; \$225,000 reappropriated for the New York State Alliance of Boys and Girls Club for a drug prevention program; 211 funded at \$1,250,000.

Funds the Westchester County Policing Program: \$2.235 million for Westchester County Police to patrol state parkways in Westchester County

### **Election Reform**

Allocates \$10 million in funding for early voting and \$14.5 million in funding for e-poll books.

## **Healthcare**

The budget restores over \$500M in punishing healthcare cuts to NY hospitals, nursing homes and home healthcare programs. By preventing the cuts proposed by the Executive, we are protecting the welfare of many of our most vulnerable New Yorkers.

New York State Senate District 40 includes parts of Northern Westchester (Briarcliff Manor, Buchanan, Cortlandt, Croton-on-Hudson, Lewisboro, Mount Kisco, Mount Pleasant, New Castle, North Salem, Peekskill, Pleasantville, Pound Ridge, Sleepy Hollow, Somers, Yorktown) Putnam (Brewster, Carmel, Patterson, Southeast) and Dutchess (Beekman, Pawling).