



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George M. Borrello

Senator Borrello Calls on State Leaders to Keep Budget Fiscally Focused

GEORGE M. BORRELLO March 23, 2020

| ISSUE: **NYS BUDGET, COVID-19, TRANSPARENCY**



ALBANY – With the COVID-19 crisis dominating the public’s attention as the state approaches its April 1 budget deadline, State Senator George Borrello today called on the governor and legislative leaders to keep policy initiatives out of the state budget, a tactic that is used to force enactment of controversial measures with a minimum of public scrutiny. He made that request in a letter he sent to all three leaders.

“Using the state budget as a cover to enact politically contentious legislation runs counter to the goals of transparency, accountability and free and open debate that state leaders claim to prioritize. Eliminating this backdoor lawmaking practice is more important than ever as our state and nation face the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis,” said Senator Borrello.

“The attention of rank-and-file legislators, all of their constituents and the media is rightly focused on this growing threat, the government response and how everyday New Yorkers can protect themselves and their families. Understandably, the state budget is not top-of-mind at this moment. State leaders should not use that distraction as an excuse to slip controversial policy initiatives into the budget. The budget should simply be what it was always intended to be - a spending plan for the next fiscal year, nothing more and nothing less,” Senator Borrello said.

“We only need to look back to last year to see the negative ramifications of embedding policy in the budget. This practice gave us the disastrous bail ‘reform’ law that has resulted in dangerous spikes in crime across the state as well as the creation of a commission to implement public campaign financing, which was later ruled unconstitutional,” said the Senator. “It is a poor way to govern and it needs to end.”

“I urge our state leaders to make this year a turning point by committing to an open and democratic budget process that places the focus on finances and avoids wrapping any legislative proposals into this spending document. Policy initiatives should be allowed to work their way through the regular legislative processes, in the full light of day and with an exchange of ideas and debate. In the midst of this crisis, there is no better time to end a practice that has been criticized by good government groups, legislators in both parties, and citizens. Let’s give New Yorkers the honest, transparent government they deserve by taking politics out of the budget process. Let’s pass a clean budget.”

Senator Borrello's letter to New York State's leaders is attached.

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