



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew Gounardes

Senator Andrew Gounardes and the Senate Majority Pass 2021-22 New York State Budget.

ANDREW GOUNARDES April 7, 2021

| ISSUE: **2021-22 STATE BUDGET, NYS SENATOR ANDREW GOUNARDES**

Brooklyn, NY -- Senator Andrew Gounardes and the Senate Democratic Majority passed the 2021-2022 State Budget that makes historic investments towards our state's economic recovery. The enacted State Budget delivers tax breaks for working and middle-class New Yorkers, invests in our education system, supports small businesses, and provides relief to homeowners on their property taxes.

Education Funding

The enacted budget will increase Foundation Aid by \$1.3 billion, and finally fulfill the state's obligation to fully fund New York City's public schools within the next three years, an historic achievement. With public schools in Senate District 22 owed \$43 million in state aid, this budget will ensure that for the first time in a generation, schools in southern Brooklyn will be fully funded with state aid. Additionally, the enacted budget invests \$40 million in grants to non-public schools for STEM programs, an important source of support for many eligible schools across southern Brooklyn.

Higher Education

Senator Gounardes, author of the proposed New Deal for CUNY, touted the 2021-2022 enacted budget as one of the best budgets for public higher education in a decade. The enacted budget makes an historic investment in CUNY and SUNY by rejecting the Governor's proposed \$75 million budget cuts and instead investing an additional \$56 million for a net increase of \$131 million for CUNY and SUNY. The budget also increases the maximum award under the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) by \$500 to assist the neediest students in the state. This is the largest increase to TAP since 2000, and the first time it has been increased since 2014. The budget also institutes a three-year tuition freeze, increases base aid for community colleges across the state, and for the first time ever, dedicates \$2 million for mental health services and services for students with disabilities, a principal goal of the New Deal for CUNY. CUNY will also receive an additional \$100 million in capital funds for new expansion initiatives. These investments will help transform CUNY into the nation's premier public urban university.

Small Businesses

To help small businesses recover from the pandemic, the state budget provides a record investment in excess of \$1 billion for New York's small businesses to supplement existing federal aid. With \$800 million in small business recovery grants, \$200 million in tax credits, and a \$35 million restaurant return-to-work tax credit targeted at establishments that were shut down in color-coded zones, this funding ensures that businesses hardest hit by the pandemic can get back on their feet. The investments made in this budget will support job growth and economic development across southern Brooklyn and across New York State.

Homeowner Relief

The budget also includes a first-of-its-kind property tax circuit breaker to help lower- and middle-income homeowners from the high burden of property taxes. This proposal, modeled

after legislation introduced by Senator Gounardes in 2020, will deliver \$440 million in property tax relief for 1.3 million New York households earning under \$250,000 based on the proportion of their income spent paying property taxes. The income tax credits will range between \$250 and \$350, which will give homeowners much needed relief during a time of such economic uncertainty. The state also commits to meaningful change for those grappling with housing instability by providing an additional \$600 million in homeowner assistance, including a \$60 million commitment over three years for the Homeowner Protection Program.

Tenant Relief

With an infusion of federal rental relief assistance, the enacted budget allocates \$2.4 billion for the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program. This program will help tenants facing financial hardship due to COVID-19 pay up to 12 months of rent and utility arrears, with an additional three months' prospective months of rent, and a year of eviction protection. The successful inclusion of this program in the state budget will ensure that tenants can remain in their homes while landlords also receive their due rent. Tenants and landlords will be eligible to apply for this relief program once it becomes finalized and operational.

Other Key Budget Investments

In addition, the enacted budget rejects all of the Governor's proposed healthcare cuts, increases state support for human services providers, including entities serving adults with disabilities, provides \$2 million for refugee resettlement agencies, fully funds the Nourish New York initiative at \$50 million, which will allow New York's emergency food providers to purchase surplus products from New York farmers and deliver them to those in need, and authorized the City of New York to offer an early retirement incentive to its municipal

workers as a tool to avoid city layoffs next year.

“There’s so much to be proud of in this budget,” said **Senator Gounardes**. “Not only is this arguably the best higher education budget passed for CUNY under this administration, it also brings us closer to a CUNY New Deal, which I’ve long championed. This budget will allow us to work towards a future where both CUNY and our public schools are fully funded, small businesses get critical state support to help rebound from the pandemic, property owners and tenants get crucial financial relief, and our safety net remains strong for the challenges that lie ahead. I’m particularly proud to have led the charge on the property tax circuit breaker proposal and the early retirement incentive for our city’s workers, and I look forward to seeing the positive impacts this entire budget will have for our neighbors across southern Brooklyn and across New York state.”

###