



SENATOR JIM ALESI



Community Update: 02/01/12

Joint Legislative Public Hearing on 2012-2013 Executive Budget Proposal: Economic Development



On Tuesday, as the Chairman of the [Senate Committee](#) on Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business, I attended the [Public Budget Hearing on Economic Development](#) at the Capitol where dozens of testimonies were presented, including comments from Ken Adams, President and CEO of [Empire State Development Corporation](#) and Brian McMahon, Executive Director of the [NYS Economic Development Council](#). Besides reviewing archived video of the Economic Development hearing, [testimonies](#) from Tuesday's hearing will be available by the end of the week. Upcoming public hearings can be live-streamed from Albany to your computer by clicking [here](#).

Also this week, Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos and Assembly Speaker Silver announced a joint legislative budget [schedule](#) that outlines the calendar for the adoption of a State Budget *prior* to the April 1st deadline.

A schedule of future public budget hearings can be found below and a complete list can be found [here](#).

Monday 2/6: [Taxes](#) 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday 2/7: [Environmental Conservation](#) 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday 2/8: [Health / Medicaid](#) 10:00 a.m.

Monday 2/13: [Human Services](#) 9:30 a.m.

Monday 2/13: [Housing](#) 12:00 p.m.

Tuesday 2/14: [Mental Hygiene](#) 9:30 a.m.

As always, I welcome your thoughts and [input](#).

Senate Passes DNA Databank Expansion Bill

I joined my colleagues in the Senate yesterday to pass legislation for the largest expansion of the state's DNA databank since it was created in 1994. The legislation mirrors the databank expansion plan proposed by Governor Cuomo in his Executive Budget to require people convicted of all felonies, as well as all misdemeanors in the penal law, to submit DNA samples.

Expanding the DNA databank will provide law enforcement with a powerful tool to help protect our families and local communities from dangerous criminals. This legislation will help close thousands of unsolved cases, provide justice to crime victims and help prevent future crimes from taking place.

Under the existing law, people convicted of about half the crimes that are committed are required to submit DNA samples, including every penal law felony and just 36 misdemeanor crimes in the penal law. The legislation would expand that list to include all felonies in state law and every penal law misdemeanor. It is projected that the expansion would add about 46,000 individual DNA samples a year to the databank.

The DNA databank expansion bill ([S.5560A](#)) is supported by law enforcement organizations across the state, including the New York State Sheriffs Association, District Attorneys Association of the State of New York, the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police and the New York State Troopers PBA.

The bill has been sent to the Assembly where Governor Cuomo has called on members to pass the bill.

Helping Families Apply for College Financial Aid



January 25 through February 25 has been designated as "New York State Student Financial Aid Awareness Month"

As a member of the [Senate Committee on Higher Education](#), I am keenly aware of the

important financial decisions students and families face when considering a college education. Financing a college education can be a challenge filled with many questions and concerns. The links below help those in our District learn about the many financial aid opportunities available to help pay for college, and how to apply for them.

The [New York State Higher Education Services Corporation](#) (HESC), the State's student financial aid agency, provides information and application forms – allowing students and parents to explore careers, apply for financial aid, search colleges and compare college financing information.

Many students and families do not realize that completing the [Free Application for Federal Students Aid](#) (FAFSA) is the first step to obtaining assistance, and that it is best to file the FAFSA as early as possible. FAFSA experts are available every Tuesday and Thursday from 12 noon until 6 p.m. by calling toll-free, 1-800-808-1790, or by emailing FAFSAhelp@HESC.org.

The HESC website offers a step-by-step tutorial for completing the [FAFSA](#), as well as information about federal, state and college-sponsored aid, including [grants](#), such as New York's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), and other scholarships, [loans](#) and work study programs.

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