

New York State Budget Report

From State Senator Patty Ritchie

Serving Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties

On time. Responsible. Fair.

The 2011 State Budget represents a major change in the way that New York State does business. After years of late budgets, this plan was enacted on-time. For the first time in 15 years, we shrunk the size of government, and spent less than the previous year. There is no new borrowing, gimmicks or taxes that, in previous years, made New York the butt of jokes, and a place that new industry and business learned to avoid at all costs.

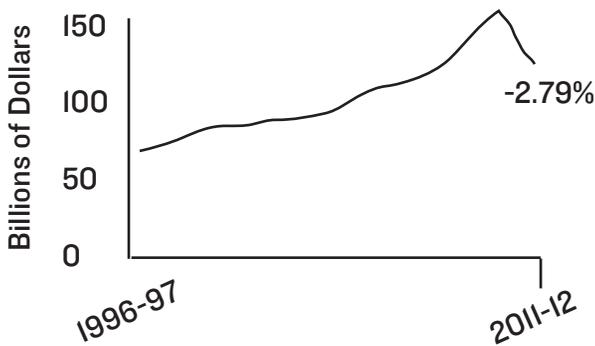


Senator Ritchie was selected to serve on the Agriculture, Housing and Environment Budget Subcommittee. The committee restored funding for critical programs that support dairy, vegetable and other farmers, while helping to hold the line and reduce overall government spending.

Partnering with Governor Cuomo and legislators from both sides of the political aisle, we enacted a budget that treats our communities fairly, and puts New York on a more firm financial footing, so our economy can begin the turnaround that we need, with new jobs and better opportunities for all New Yorkers.

First spending cut in 15 years

The new state budget is a responsible plan that reduced spending for the first time in 15 years.



A plan for more jobs

While reining in taxes and spending to help boost private sector job development, the budget also invests in two key areas to help grow our economy. The new ReCharge New York program doubles the amount of low-cost hydropower that's available to businesses across the state that create jobs. And we accepted Governor Cuomo's plan for new regional economic development councils to target job-creating efforts to different regions of the state like ours. I look forward to working with the Governor to make the new councils a success.

Health care

The final budget includes recommendations from Governor Cuomo's task force to rein in the runaway growth of Medicaid. And we restored cuts to the popular EPIC prescription drug program for senior citizens.

Education Aid

With the loss of \$6 billion in one-time federal aid, Gov. Cuomo proposed deep cuts in aid for Upstate and rural school districts like ours. The Senate led the way to bring more money to Upstate schools and help those districts that were hardest hit.

Oswego County restored cuts \$1,875,619

Altmar-Parish-Williamstown	\$251,511
Fulton	\$289,323
Hannibal	\$116,566
Central Square	\$239,660
Mexico	\$133,037
Oswego	\$499,494
Pulaski	\$89,310
Sandy Creek	\$75,590
Phoenix	\$181,128

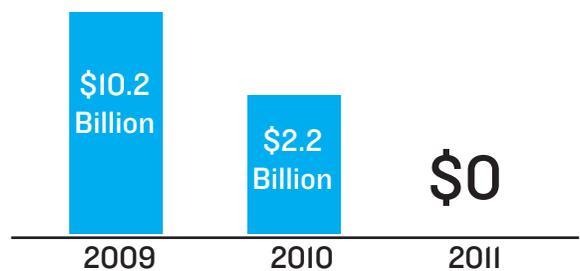
Senator Ritchie,

I would like to thank you for all of your efforts in seeking equitable aid for our school district.

Bill Lynch, Superintendent, Fulton City Schools

No new taxes

New taxes adopted over the last three years
(Billions)



The budget does not include any new taxes that could derail the fragile economic recovery that's just beginning to take hold. Some advocates for higher spending called for hundreds of millions of dollars in tax increases, but I stood with Governor Cuomo in successfully arguing that more taxes would hurt our state heading into the future.

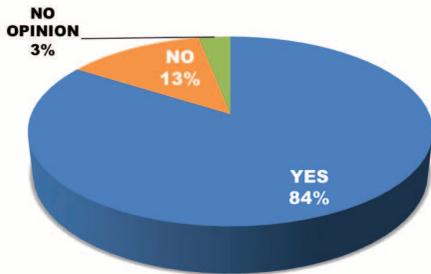
Helping grow our family farms

Agriculture remains our Number One industry and, as Senate Agriculture Committee Chair, I took seriously my responsibility to help farmers in tough times, and support the industry's growth as a vital part of our plan to make New York's economy grow. I am glad that we successfully restored \$3.5 million to programs that provide critical research and marketing assistance to farmers, and are especially vital to dairy and vegetable sectors.

You told me. I listened.

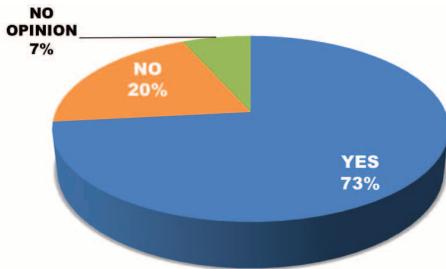
Faced with tough decisions, and a need to change the way Albany does business, I turned to you. Through the mail and online, over 6000 residents of Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence County took the time to respond to my Community Legislative Survey. You told me how you felt about New York's taxes, bloated government spending, and the need to kick start our economy.

We want a budget that spends less



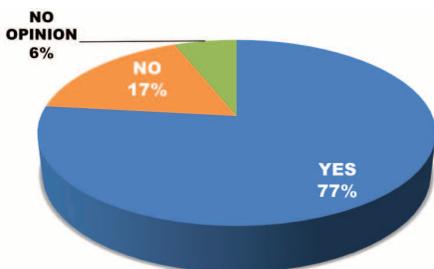
Residents of the 48th Senate District said overwhelmingly that you wanted to reduce the size of government and spend less. The new budget reduces spending from last year by 2.79 percent, the first real cut in 15 years. And state agencies and bureaucrats will learn to do more with less.

We want fewer taxes



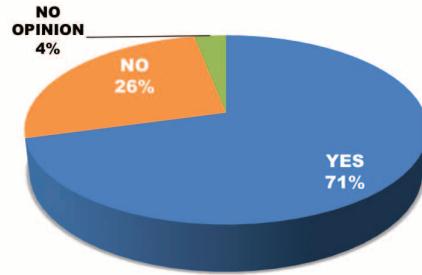
You said you supported lower taxes to help businesses create jobs. The new budget rejected new and higher taxes—pushed primarily by advocates for more government spending. Those higher taxes would hurt farmers and small business owners. The budget also lowered the sales tax on new clothing purchases to help retailers, and save money for families. We still must do more, like adopt my plan for \$5000 tax credit for every new job that businesses create. I will continue to press for the tax relief New Yorkers need to get working again.

We want to gain control over Medicaid spending



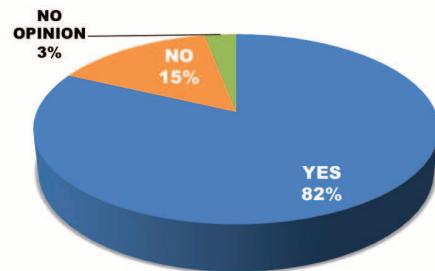
Working together with hospitals, insurers, providers and the workforce, Governor Cuomo proposed a sweeping series of changes to rein in runaway health care costs. The result is the first two-year Medicaid plan that slowed the growth that was contributing to our deficits.

We want relief from higher property taxes



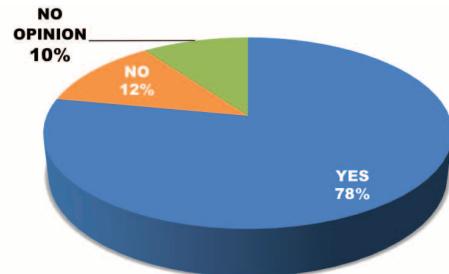
Lowering our property taxes remains a top priority for me. The new budget protects the STAR property tax program that lowers your school tax bill, and faced cuts in previous budgets. And we rejected over \$200 million in mandates on schools and local governments to help prevent tax increases.

We want a property tax cap



The Senate approved a property tax cap to limit the annual growth of taxes earlier this year but, so far, the Assembly has not followed our lead, so this provision was not included in the final budget. I will continue to work on this issue to protect homeowners from soaring tax bills.

We want less red tape



The budget shrinks the size of government bureaucracy, including eliminating 20 percent of authorities and commissions by the end of this year. Cutting the bureaucracy will lower costs to taxpayers and ease the path for New Yorkers who want to start and grow their businesses.



Senator Ritchie met with local highway officials prior to approving the budget which included funding for county and town road and bridge work.

For more information
www.ritchie.nysenate.gov