



NEWS FROM NEW YORK STATE SENATOR JAMES SKOUFIS

skoufis.nysenate.gov | skoufis@nysenate.gov

[f](#) [@](#) [t](#) @JamesSkoufis



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CONTACT: Emma Fuentes | 518.573.1409 | fuentes@nysenate.gov

****PRESS RELEASE****

Skoufis Secures Tax Relief for Hudson Valley Families, Historic Investments in Infrastructure, Schools, Parks in State Budget

Senator James Skoufis (D-Hudson Valley) was laser-focused on delivering a final budget that delivered for his constituents by putting money back in their pockets, protecting our quality of life, and getting the Hudson Valley its fair share of dollars. Skoufis touted numerous wins for local families in the final budget, set for adoption on Friday. Following months of negotiations between lawmakers and the Governor, the balanced budget features several key provisions Skoufis fought for, including:

- **Relief at the Pump:** Senator Skoufis' proposal to create a gas tax holiday—encompassing both motor fuel taxes and state sales taxes—was included in the final budget, running from June 1 to December 31. This measure translates to urgent relief at the gas pump for struggling families, while also helping to drive down the cost of goods in the grocery aisle by reducing trucking/shipping costs.
- **Property & Income Tax Relief:** Lawmakers have approved new STAR rebates for middle-class property owners as well as accelerating a phase-in of middle-class income tax cuts, all to keep more money in New Yorkers' pockets.
- **Expanded Universal Pre-K:** Senator Skoufis continued his fight for truly universal pre-kindergarten, successfully securing an additional \$125 million above and beyond last year's allocation and creating 1,651 new pre-k slots in his Hudson Valley communities—the most new seats added to any Senate District. This investment marks the start of a three-year phase-in to completely universal, statewide pre-kindergarten.
- **Historic Increases in School Aid for Hudson Valley Districts:** Schools in the Senator's district will see an 16.5% increase in state education aid, a historic increase that will keep a lid on school property taxes while also providing for expanded educational programming, student services, and more.

- **Key Investments in Local Infrastructure:** Senator Skoufis successfully fought for unprecedented infrastructure funding for the Hudson Valley , such as the long-awaited expansion of Route 17 to three lanes in each direction. Skoufis will be announcing road repaving and bridge projects throughout the Senate District in the coming weeks and months that will bring about quality-of-life improvements for area commuters and residents.
- **Long-Overdue Funding for Local Parks:** Senator Skoufis successfully fought for an additional \$50 million for state parks which will jumpstart two key, transformative projects in the Hudson Valley, the details of which will be announced in the coming weeks.
- **Relief for Small Businesses:** As our small businesses struggle to recover from pandemic ups and downs, the adopted budget creates a \$250 million tax credit for COVID-related business expenses, meaningful tax cuts for small businesses, and an expansion of both the “hire-a-vet” and restaurant return-to-work tax credits.
- **A Comprehensive Audit of Economic Development Incentives:** Long an outspoken advocate for reforming New York’s failed ‘economic development’ policies, Senator Skoufis successfully negotiated an agreement to conduct an independent, comprehensive audit of all taxpayer-funded incentives and corporate subsidies. Taxpayers deserve to know if they are getting a return on investment for the subsidies they’re underwriting.
- **Pay Raises of 5.4% for Mental Health and Developmental Disability Workers and 22% for Home Care Workers, and a \$3,000 Bonus for Frontline Healthcare Workers:** Senator Skoufis has partnered with these underpaid, overworked employees throughout his time as a state legislator and knows they deserve the respect of decent pay for their hard work. While there is still more to do, these pay raises are an important start to ensuring the viability of these essential workforces.

“Our state budget makes key investments where it matters: in our communities, our families, our small businesses, and our care economy,” said **Senator Skoufis**. “Like in any budget, there are offensive provisions, such as the bad deal that is the Buffalo Bills stadium. That's why I championed an audit of so-called economic development spending that will finally shed a light on the wasteful spending that often occurs. As we emerge from the pandemic, we must chart a smarter path forward – I'll always continue to put my Hudson Valley constituents first and ensure we get our fair share from the State Legislature.”

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