



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael H. Ranzenhofer

Efforts in New Budget to Keep WNY Economy Moving Forward

SENATOR MICHAEL H. RANZENHOFER April 20, 2016

| ISSUE: **STAR (SCHOOL TAX RELIEF PROGRAM), TAX RELIEF, GAP ELIMINATION ADJUSTMENT (GEA), LOCAL ROADS BRIDGES TRANSPORTATION**

Look for...

Senator Mike Ranzenhofer's
Monthly Column

...In your local newspaper
the third week of every month

Senator Ranzenhofer's column appeared in the Amherst and Clarence Bees on April 20th

To keep Western New York moving in the right direction, we must continue to make our economy as strong as possible. The 2016-17 State Budget accomplishes this goal in three important ways— by controlling spending, cutting taxes and investing in our community.

For the sixth year in a row, the budget restrains spending growth to below two percent. This self-imposed spending cap has saved taxpayers approximately \$31 billion. A spending cap is

critical to protecting taxpayers from higher taxes in future years.

I fought for and delivered one of the largest income tax reductions in state history for residents and small businesses. This broad-based tax cut plan will establish the lowest middle-class tax rate since 1948. When fully implemented, this new income tax cut will save middle-class taxpayers \$4.2 billion annually.

There is also more property tax relief in the new budget, including:

- \$2.7 billion in funding for STAR programs;
- Another round of tax rebate checks; and
- A record amount of school aid to protect homeowners from higher property taxes.

Part of a record level of funding for school districts incorporates an end to the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA). I vowed to do away with the GEA for students, parents and our communities, and I kept my word. Governor Cuomo initially pushed for a phase-out over two years, and I am proud to report an end to the GEA budget cuts this school year.

Additionally, the new budget invests in our roads and bridges by committing a record level of funding for infrastructure projects. Finally, Upstate New York will get its fair share of transportation dollars.

Upstate will benefit from an additional \$6 billion to repair our highways, roads and bridges. Now, Upstate's infrastructure will be improved and repaired with a record \$27.1 billion investment. I have been fighting throughout the budget process for a fair and more equitable distribution of resources.

The new budget achieves parity of transportation dollars between Upstate and Downstate. In other words, I have been able to successfully secure an equal amount of state funding for our infrastructure.

As you'll recall, Governor Cuomo's original proposal shortchanged Upstate infrastructure by \$6 billion, resulting in 35% more state transportation dollars going to Downstate's Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The new budget re-establishes fairness in funding with a regionally-balanced plan.

Furthermore, state funding for the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Program and the new Pave NY program will help local governments repair their own county, town and village roads which are sorely in need of repair. Committing more funding to infrastructure projects will help to create thousands of jobs, save motorists hundreds of dollars in vehicle repairs, and keep drivers and their passengers safe.

The new State Budget isn't just investing in our small businesses, schools and roads, it's investing in our future— right here, in our community.