



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lea Webb

## Senator Lea Webb Announces Historic Funding for Southern Tier in Senate One-House Budget Proposal

LEA WEBB March 17, 2023

| ISSUE: **LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SMALL BUSINESS, WORKING FAMILIES, HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Albany, NY** - Senator Lea Webb today announced the details of the New York State Senate's one-house budget proposal for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, which includes historic funding for education, environment, housing, transportation, agriculture, health, mental health, and support for Upstate New York's families and small businesses.

"The Senate's historic one-house budget proposal includes significant investments for our community," **said Senator Lea Webb**. "I am proud of the work we have done to deliver a budget resolution that centers the needs of New Yorkers in equitable ways especially in our most vulnerable communities. Our Senate one-house budget proposal addresses this moment by supporting our workforce, infrastructure, and working families here in Upstate New York. As our negotiations continue, I will keep fighting to ensure that our priorities are included in the final State Budget."

Senator Webb championed the following budget priorities that are included in the Senate's historic one-house budget proposal:

### **Support for Counties and Local Government**

Our one-house budget includes big wins for local governments and will deliver much-needed funding to support our road and bridges, adding hundreds of millions of dollars over what the Governor proposed to support needed repairs and help with extreme weather. We're also increasing the funding that goes directly to municipalities to help their operations by almost 30%. We're supporting our first responders by adding a \$50 million capital fund for our Volunteer fire houses, which are on the frontline in times of emergency for many of the communities I represent.

- The Senate's budget would provide for a record increase in Aid to Municipalities by adding \$213 million to support small local governments across the state this year and would fund a task force to look at ways the state government can better support our city, town and villages.
- Additionally, the Senate plan would fully reject efforts by the Governor to divert federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage (FMAP) payments from counties to the State. Instead, there would be \$624 million for the State-share of Medicaid for local governments.
- The Senate majority recognizes the need to support local governments with critical road repairs and this is reflected in the Senate's plan to increase Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) funding by \$200 million statewide. The budget proposal also includes an increase of \$70 million for the Extreme Winter Recovery Program, an increase of \$50 million for the Bridge New York program. These funds go directly to our local governments to fix local roads.
- \$50 Million Capital Fund for Volunteer Firehouses and increased the personal income tax credit for Volunteer Firefighters.
- Made EMS an "essential" service and created a dedicated funding stream for nonprofit and volunteer EMS providers.

## **Economic Development & Small Business Support:**

Supporting our workers and small businesses is how we will ensure that our communities can begin to thrive and not just survive. We're looking to raise the minimum wage and ensure it keeps up with inflation and are providing \$100 million for small business grants and \$3 million to support MWBEs to make sure they don't get left behind.

- \$100 million to establish a Small Business Development Grants Program
- \$2.4 million in additional support for the Minority and Women-Owned Business Development and Lending Program, for a total of \$3 million.
- Modified the Film Tax credit by rejecting above the line expenses, modifying to increase the cap for upstate to \$20 million and included language to explore ways to increase community engagement.

## **Support for Working Families:**

Our Senate budget proposal also prioritizes working families by increasing access to affordable, high-quality childcare and by strengthening this critical workforce. We increased eligibility so families making up to 103% of the area median income have access to subsidized childcare and are also investing in our childcare workforce with \$500 million to support workforce retention and salary increases.

- Increased funding for and access to childcare by:
  - \$623 million to expand childcare eligibility up to 103 percent of the State median income level in 2023. The Senate also proposes to increase childcare eligibility to 129 percent of the State median income level in 2024.
  - \$500 million for the Workforce Retention Grant program, providing up to \$12,000 in salary enhancements to childcare workers. Eligible childcare workers must be employed at a childcare facility that serves families receiving subsidized childcare. Employees will receive a proportional share of the \$12,000 based upon the percentage of an employer's enrolled children that are receiving subsidized childcare.
- Increase the minimum wage and so that it is indexed to inflation.
- Expand the Empire State Child Tax Credit to include children under four.

## **Critical Support for Health, Mental Health & Human Services:**

We have included critical financial support for our care industry workers with an 8.5% COLA in this one-house proposal. This is a critical measure to help stabilize the care industry, which is predominantly women, by giving workers a livable wage and attracting more individuals into our mental health workforce.

- 8.5% COLA for all workers at OMH, OASAS, OCFS, OPWDD
- Increased the Medicaid reimbursement rate for Hospitals and Nursing by 10%.
- \$1 billion for Financially Distressed and Safety New Hospitals

- Added \$10 million to support Doula services.
- \$10 million for a pilot of Daniel's Law to support increasing access to emergency mental health crisis counselors.

## **Support for Public Schools and Libraries**

We have also made historic investments in our students and teachers by finally fulfilling our commitment to the full funding of the Foundation Aid formula to provide critical operating dollars to public schools across the state. And I am very proud that our budget plan also recognizes that too many children go hungry during the school day and includes \$280 million to support universal school meals.

- Full Funding of Foundation Aid
  - Reject the carve out for High Impact Tutoring
- Rejected lifting the Charter School Cap
- \$280 million for Universal School Meals
- \$125 million for UPK reimbursement increases for early adopting schools
- Increased Library Operating Aid by \$7 million and added \$25 million in Capital Funding

## **Support for Higher Ed**

We're providing more capital and operating funding to our SUNYs and community colleges and have rejected the Governor's call for a tuition rate hike, ensuring that these institutions can remain within reach for all New Yorkers.

- The Senate prioritizes support for public higher education in the one house budget by recommending an additional \$151 in operating aid for our four-year SUNY colleges and universities and an additional \$16.7 million to support SUNYs community colleges while rejecting harmful proposals that would increase tuition for New York's students.

- Additionally, our proposal would seek to eliminate current and future mandatory university fees on both SUNY and CUNY graduate students.
- Additionally, this budget would include legislation by Senator Webb to establish the SUNY Black Leadership Institute designed to ensure that campus leadership has greater representation of the diverse student populations across SUNY campuses.
- We have also Increased maximum family income eligibility for Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) eligibility from \$80,000 to \$110,000.

## **Protecting Our Environment**

The Senate Majority continues to prioritize environmental protection and conservation through its one house budget plan beginning with a proposal to increase the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) to \$500 million. Increased EPF dollars would mean more funding for land acquisition and farmland protection, support for water quality improvements and waterfront revitalization projects, and support for both state and local park land. Understanding the needs to address groundwater issues, the Senate's budget plan includes \$50 million for lead service line replacement and septic replacement.

- Increased the EPF by \$100 million to \$500 million
  - Climate resilient farms increased to \$30 million.
  - Farmland protection increased to \$25 million.
- Increased Clean Water Infrastructure Funding by \$100 million to \$600 million
  - \$50 million for lead service line replacement.
- Restored all cuts to the agriculture program and increased funding by \$5.15 Million in operating aid and \$1.4 million in capital funding.

## **Support for Affordable Housing:**

The need for more affordable housing exists in all corners of New York State, including within the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes region. The Senate is proposing changes to the Governor's plan to implement housing targets in communities across the state by removing mandatory requirements and overrides of local zoning and the creation of a land use advisory council to monitor and review municipal growth over the next 3 years. Additionally, the Senate would like to invest \$500 million in smart growth over the next several years to provide incentives to municipalities that expand affordable housing stock while maintaining local zoning control.

- Also included in the Senate's housing plan is full restoration of the Homeowner Protection Program that aids organizations to provide legal representation to those needing mortgage relief to prevent home loss due to foreclosure.
- The Senate's proposal also addresses housing insecurity with the inclusion of \$250 million for the Housing access Voucher Program to provide housing subsidies to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Adding \$389 million for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) for a total of \$639 million.

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