

News from Senator George M. Borrello

57th Senate District

Representing Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and portions of Livingston County

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STATEMENT FROM SENATOR GEORGE BORRELLO ON THE 2022-23 NYS BUDGET

ALBANY – New York State Senator George Borrello issued the following statement on the 2022-23 State Budget.

“The Governor and the Democratic supermajorities in each house of the Legislature faced the task of putting together a budget with the stars perfectly aligned in their favor. The state is flush with cash, courtesy of the federal government’s pandemic relief and higher than expected revenues, and one party controls all three branches of government.

Under these conditions, putting together a strong, responsible and on-time budget should have been easily within reach. Yet, it proved too much for our current leadership. The result was passage, eight days late, of a massive \$220 billion budget laden with an unsustainable level of spending and new recurring programs. While there are positive items in the spending plan that will help struggling middle-class taxpayers, which I supported, there are also a host of missed opportunities to truly change some of the most serious problems facing our state.

The most glaring omission and one that polls indicate New Yorkers want more than anything else is the restoration of judicial discretion in setting bail. The disastrous bail changes forced into law in 2019 by radical special interests have fueled soaring crime rates across our state, resulting in more victimization of law-abiding residents. Despite rhetoric by the governor and legislative leaders that the bail changes aren’t responsible for the double-digit increases in crime we are seeing, no one – especially the public – has been fooled by those claims.

Although the controversy over the proposed bail tweaks largely held up the budget, the changes they’ve included in here are so minor, their impact will be close to nothing. Once again, the protection and rights of criminals have come before those of law-abiding New Yorkers, which is disheartening.

There were areas of agreement where it was clear that the advocacy of myself and my Republican colleagues had an impact, most notably on a provision to finally repeal the fiber optic tax, which has been the number one obstacle to greater broadband access in our rural areas. After fighting for this repeal for more than two years, it is gratifying to know that our voices were heard and we’ve made a huge step forward towards addressing this issue.

Other crucial budget investments that I support are the acceleration of the middle-class income tax cuts, a step I myself proposed through legislation. While my bill would have allowed residents to benefit more quickly by enacting the change immediately, this is still important relief that will benefit New Yorkers, as is the property tax rebate check for homeowners. These efforts will make a meaningful difference to families trying to make ends meet in the midst of high inflation.

However, I strongly supported fully suspending the state’s gas tax, which is crippling household budgets right now. Full exemption of the gas tax would save New York motorists 46 cents per gallon, a noticeable savings.

Instead, the Democrat majorities included a partial, 16-cent suspension, which is a token effort, but too small to make a measurable difference.”

Small businesses bore the brunt of the economic fallout from the pandemic, which is why I have continued to push for more assistance to aid in their recovery. This budget will offer some targeted tax cuts for small business, tax credits for COVID capital costs, and, for restaurants, a ‘return to work’ tax credit that will help support their efforts to hire more staff. Restaurants will also be able to bring back ‘alcohol-to-go’ which, for many, was a lifeline during the pandemic.

These tax cuts and credits are the strongest steps we can take to jump start our economy and make our state more affordable for New Yorkers. That is why I voted ‘yes’ on this section of the budget.

However, one crucially important action that employers needed from this budget didn’t happen. That was to direct some of the state’s surplus funds to pay down all or a portion of the \$9 billion pandemic-driven debt of our state’s Unemployment Insurance Fund. Because our state’s Democratic leadership failed to follow the example of more than 32 other states who took this step, this debt will continue to be an anchor around the necks of our small businesses and economic recovery.

Despite the advocacy that led to some significant victories, this budget does not give New Yorkers the relief they need and the restoration of public safety they deserve. But, I will continue to speak out on behalf of the hardworking, law-abiding people of our region and to fight for the policies that will turn our state around.”

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