



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeremy A. Cooney

Senator Cooney's Legislative Priorities for 2024

JEREMY A. COONEY January 1, 2024

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(ROCHESTER, NY) - Senator Jeremy Cooney (D-Rochester), says, “A new year means a new legislative session for New York State. It’s a chance for us to revisit unresolved issues from the previous session and introduce new legislation that would be beneficial for Greater Rochester. My priorities continue to focus on core issues like education and equity, as well as growing regional economic opportunities for our workforce and underserved populations. As a member of the Senate Majority, I’m looking forward to what we can accomplish this year in the state legislature.”

Senator Cooney has a full agenda for the 2024 legislative session, including:

Cannabis - Senator Cooney held a public hearing in October 2023 to address the challenges of the rollout of the legalized cannabis market and determine what the State can do to fix it. Passing reforms based on this feedback are a priority, including eliminating the potency tax ([S4831](#)). Senator Cooney remains committed to making sure New York's cannabis market meets the social justice goals laid out in the MRTA.

Expand the Empire State Child Tax Credit ([S771](#)) - Senator Cooney would like to increase the tax credit to families with young children. As a representative of the City of Rochester, where nearly 50% of children are living below the poverty level, it's critical to find ways to put more money in the pockets of these families. Expanding this tax credit, which would increase the credit for children 4 years and older to \$500, and to \$1,000 for children under 4, is a first step.

Equity in Leave Act ([S921A](#)) - This bill will increase temporary disability for the first time since the 1980's, aligning the state's antiquated disability benefit with its more recent Paid Family Leave benefit through a phased-in approach that gives employers and employees time to adjust. Data shows that while other states have acted to increase their disability benefit caps, New York's inaction has led it to fall far behind the benefits set in other states that require the coverage. To date, 12 states, including New York, have programs that provide for disability benefits, with four more set to join the field in 2026. New York is the only state that has set a lower benefit for disability benefits than Paid Family Leave. Additional information is available [here](#).

School Ventilation Bill ([S6563](#)) - The heat wave this past September, as well as the COVID pandemic, brought into focus the need for schools to adhere to certain ventilation standards.

Senator Cooney's bill will ensure the air ventilation and filtration process that brings outside air into the school building meets the ventilation rates detailed in the national Uniform Mechanical Code. Safe air quality levels in public schools protect the health of students and staff, significantly reduce the risk of infectious airborne diseases, increase attendance and improve student performance.

First Time Home Buyer Tax Savings Program (S6574) - Senator Cooney's first time home buyer program would authorize first time home buyers to establish savings accounts to buy their first home combined with a personal income tax deduction for deposits into such accounts. As the housing market continues to be competitive and challenging for first time buyers, it's important the state creates programs to reduce the barriers to entry. Home ownership is an important measure for economic stability and success and should be attainable for any New Yorker who is interested. This program will help people save for their dream.

Car Theft Prevention Act (S7715A) - This new bill would empower local law enforcement and judges, giving them another tool to address the rise in car break-ins and thefts impacting Rochester and other communities across New York State. The bill adds the felony offenses of criminal possession of stolen property in the first through fourth degrees and grand larceny as qualifying offenses that can trigger bail consideration by local judges. In most situations, those charged with vehicle theft are not eligible to be assigned bail.

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