



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Steven D. Rhoads

Senate Republicans Unveil Legislative Package To Keep Education A Priority For All New Yorkers

STEVEN D. RHOADS January 29, 2024

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A plan committed to ensuring New York's schools have access to the resources they need.

Albany, NY - The New York State Senate Republican Conference today unveiled a legislative package aimed at keeping education a priority for all New Yorkers. Key among the legislative package's provisions is reversing the devastating cuts to schools that Governor Hochul included in her budget proposal.

The elimination of the “hold harmless” provision that provides critical stability to local school districts is a glaring example of Albany Democrats’ misplaced priorities. This bloated \$233 billion budget siphons state aid away from local schools while dedicating \$2.4 billion in taxpayer dollars earmarked for migrants, bringing the total to \$4.3 billion over the last two years.

The migrant crisis continues to get worse because radical politicians in Albany refuse to put an end to wrongheaded sanctuary city policies. Instead, they continue to throw more money at the issue and away from programs that provide for our New York families, including school aid.

Education should always be among the top priorities for state government, and the Senate Republican Conference is committed to ensuring that New Yorkers’ hard earned tax dollars help schools obtain the resources they need.

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“The safety, success, and well-being of our students should always be a top priority. The Governor’s proposal to change the school aid formula and hastily eliminate the hold harmless provision while simultaneously increasing the state budget to give billions to address the self-inflicted migrant crisis, millions in theft prevention due to lack of action on bail reform, and millions for swimming pools shows her priorities are truly misguided. The Governor’s proposed changes in education funding would cut over \$4 million in school aid - in just my Senate District alone. We must empower our teachers and students to be their best and chart our students on a course for a lifetime of success. The legislative package unveiled today has meaningful action items that put our students first and serves as a much-needed step towards ensuring the safety of our students and improving their educational outcomes. By tackling these issues head-on, this legislative package reaffirms our commitment to the hardworking taxpayers of New York and shows our support for the well-being of our students and the quality of education they receive. As the budget process continues, I remain undeterred and ready to fight for our teachers, schools, and families to ensure our children get the quality education they deserve,” said Senator Steven Rhoads, SD 5th.

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“The Governor’s budget is yet another example of the complete disregard for New York families and taxpayers. \$4.3 billion over two years will be used to address the migrant crisis that was caused by open borders and sanctuary city policies supported by Democrats. At the same time, they are stripping millions of dollars from rural and suburban school districts. We are tired of misplaced priorities from Albany’s One-Party Rule, and our conference will fight to get all school districts the funding they deserve,” **said Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt.**

“As the Ranker on the Senate Education Committee, I jokingly say that before I became a legislator, I had a real job: I was a special education teacher, ran a resource room and helped students with their individual education plans. We can’t build a budget off the backs of students, their education, and local taxpayers. Students are already behind due to Covid and being out of the classroom for so long. Instead of the Governor urging the president to secure the border, she’s looking to redistribute state funds from other pressing needs and spend \$2.4 billion for migrants who are being treated like pawns on a chessboard. Meanwhile, the Governor is slashing the hold harmless funding for the education of students across the state including cutting \$6.692 million in funding for seven schools in my senate district. That’s totally unacceptable. When the Governor’s spending priorities are on those who are here illegally instead of educating our citizens, is it any wonder why New York residents are fleeing our state in droves?” **said Senator Jim Tedisco, Ranking Member of the Senate Education Committee, SD 44th.**

The legislative package unveiled today includes proposals that will keep our students safe and improve educational outcomes in school throughout the state:

- **Reversing misguided changes in the education formula proposed in the Executive Budget that will take resources away from our local schools; and**

- **Closing the pandemic learning loss gap** by ensuring unspent Federal emergency relief aid supports academic recovery programs, expanding state grant funding, creating an office in the State Education Department to track outcomes of such programs and focusing on future aid increases for early education to ensure students are provided a solid foundation for future academic challenges; and
- **Prohibiting the housing of migrants in K-12 schools or on school grounds throughout the state** (S.7391, Senator Alexis Weik); and provide grants to school districts and non-public schools. (S.4985, Senator Oberacker).
- **Committing greater resources for school building security** by creating a school resource officer program to permit the employment of retired law enforcement officers.

The legislative package outlined today is the first in a series of comprehensive proposals that will be put forth by the Republican Conference this session in order to assure New Yorkers that our children's education will remain a top priority.

Earlier this month, Senate Republicans unveiled the "A New Hope for the Empire State" 2024 Legislative Agenda. A New Hope for the Empire State agenda prioritizes the issues that affect everyday New Yorkers, but have been neglected by the radical left politicians who control Albany:

- A plan to increase affordability;
- Improve public safety; and
- Build a greater New York.