



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mario R. Mattera

Senator Mattera And Senate Republican Conference Unveil Legislative Package To Keep Education A Priority for All New Yorkers

MARIO R. MATTERA January 29, 2024

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Senator Mario R. Mattera (2nd Senate District) joined his colleagues in the New York State Senate Republican Conference today to unveil 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.

“It is critical that we continue to be vocal with Governor Hochul and I’m proud to stand with my colleagues to provide real solutions that will help our schools, our teachers and our taxpayers. The cuts she is proposing will force our schools to cut services for our children, increase taxes on homeowners and lay off our teachers, administration and staff. We demand that our state does better. Instead of misusing \$2.4 billion on her self-created migrant disaster, Governor Hochul should ensure that all of our schools get their fair share and all of our children get the education they deserve,” said Senator Mattera.

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 the Democrats 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.

“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 Ort.

"56 schools on Long Island are slated to receive huge cuts – a total of \$43 million dollars. Educating our children should be the priority, providing 2.4 billion of taxpayer money and housing illegal migrants in our schools is simply wrong. Students should not miss one day of education just because state and city officials cannot manage the self-inflicted migrant crisis. I have a bill that prioritizes and ensures our children will not allow the housing of migrants in our K-12 classrooms," said Senator Alexis Weik (8th Senate District).

"Governor Hochul's budget proposal diverts much-needed state funding from our schools, leaving our teachers without the tools and resources they need to teach and our children without the tools and resources they need to succeed, all while giving \$2.4 billion to perpetuate a self-created migrant crisis. It is nothing short of governmental malpractice. Maybe to the Governor these are just numbers on a chart, but these are our children, and we will not let her place the burden of her failed policies on our children's backs. We will fight for our kids," said Senator Jack Martins, Vice Chair of the Senate Republican Conference (7th Senate District).

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 Weik); and
- Committing greater resources for school building security by creating a school resource officer program to permit the employment of retired law enforcement officers and provide grants to school districts and non-public schools. (S.4985 - Senator Oberacker).

“I am deeply concerned about the proposed cuts in state aid to several school districts in Senate District 9, particularly Long Beach, facing a \$4.3 million reduction, one of the highest in the state. This reduction is especially troubling in the face of the Governor allocating \$2.4 billion to the self-created migrant crisis in her record breaking \$233 billion budget. Continued investments in our schools is vital to ensure that more New Yorkers don't leave our great state. The 2023 initiative to fully fund Foundation Aid marked an important stride but any reduction in funding to our schools would be a detrimental setback, and I will strongly advocate against any reduction in foundation aid. It's crucial that we continue to maintain substantial financial support for our schools, fostering a thriving educational environment which contributes to the well-being of our communities. Any decrease in these crucial investments would constitute a devastating step backwards,” said Senator Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick (9th Senate District).

“Providing hope for our future is not possible if we fail to provide a quality education to our next generation. Sweeping millions from our children's education while simultaneously increasing the amount spent on a self imposed migrant crisis, is not only irresponsible, it's a slap in the face to every hard working, law abiding, tax paying person in this state. Reversing the Governor's proposed school funding cuts is a top priority for me and for our conference,”

said Senator Dean Murray (3rd Senate District).

“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 (5th Senate District).

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.