



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Senator Webb and the New York State Senate Majority Pass 2024-25 Budget

LEA WEBB April 22, 2024

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The SFY 2024-25 Addresses Critical Priorities for New Yorkers & Enacts Key Senate Majority Proposals

**(Binghamton, NY)** Senator Webb and the New York State Senate Majority are proud to announce the successful passage and enactment of the New York State budget, a testament to the dedication and tireless efforts of the Senate Majority in delivering meaningful relief and progress for the people of New York. This comprehensive budget reflects the Senate

Majority's commitment to addressing the pressing needs of working individuals and families, safeguarding public education, and implementing a holistic approach to housing reform and affordability.

"This final budget delivers on many of the Senate Majority's priorities on critical issues that impact working families across the Southern Tier," **said Senator Lea Webb**. "As Chair of the Women's Issues Committee, I am proud that we have continued strengthening protections for reproductive and maternal health by codifying the Reproductive Freedom and Equity Grant Program and by enacting the Community Doula Expansion Grant Program. We are continuing our commitment to education, increasing school funding and rejecting what would have been catastrophic cuts to our school districts. We have made historic investments in higher education, including the first increase to the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) since 2000. Additionally, we are sending long overdue relief to our municipalities with increases to CHIPS funding and the first increase in AIM funding since 2012. This budget takes significant steps toward addressing our housing crisis and protecting tenants. There is much more work to do and we will continue to fight to make a difference in the lives of New Yorkers."

The Enacted Budget, featuring provisions to address key Senator Webb and Majority priorities, includes:

### **Restoration of Public Education Funding and Supporting SUNY/CUNY**

Carrying on the proud legacy of being the "education conference," the Senate Democratic Majority ensured that no cuts would be made to school funding, and that kids across the state would still receive the investments that they both need and deserve. Thanks to the Democratic Conference's advocacy, this year's budget will also include transformative investments in higher education to make continued learning more accessible. These wins

include:

### ***School Funding***

- Rejecting the Executive's proposal to eliminate Hold Harmless and also increasing Foundation Aid for the poorest 63 districts in the State. This is a Foundation Aid increase of \$934 million, or 3.9 percent, over the current school year, which is an increase of \$430 million, or 1.8 percent, over the Executive's Foundation Aid proposal.
- A Comprehensive Study by The Rockefeller Institute and NYS Department of Education to develop a modernized school funding formula.
- \$180 million to continue our historic commitment to providing universal school meals for thousands of New York children.
- Extending Mayoral Control for two years.
- An additional \$100 million for Universal Pre-K to allow school districts throughout the state to serve at least 90% of eligible four year olds.
- A study to work towards a pathway for expanded afterschool across New York State.

### ***Higher Education***

- The Enacted Budget increases SUNY Operating Aid by \$60 million, Capital by \$60 million and Community College Support by \$6 million over the Executive's proposal.
- Increases CUNY Operating Aid by \$40 million, Capital by \$40 million and Community College Support by \$4 million over the Executive's proposal.
- The Senate also provided significant support for the SUNY Hospitals, providing operating assistance to cover their debt service and \$150 million in capital.

- The Enacted Budget increases the Tuition Assistance Program—for the first time since 2000—by \$53 million to make college more affordable. It increases the minimum award from \$500 to \$1,000 and adds part-time tap for proprietary students. This increase also includes raising the TAP income threshold, by:
  - Increasing the household income limit for dependent students from \$80,000 to \$125,000
  - Increase the married, no children income ceiling from \$40,000 to \$60,000 (Net Taxable Income)
  - Increasing the max income limit from \$10,000 to \$30,000

### **Revitalizing Housing for All New Yorkers**

Amidst the ongoing housing crisis in New York, the Senate Democratic Conference put forward and secured a transformative housing deal that targets both the affordability and supply of the current market through meaningful tenant and homeowner protections, along with real incentives to replenish the stock. This historic deal includes:

#### ***Hard fought Senate Majority proposals in final package:***

- Housing Opportunities for the Future - a new \$150 million program to build affordable homes and rentals across New York State.
- A new opt-in construction or commercial conversion tax exemption for affordable housing outside the City of New York.
- Authorization for municipalities to adopt a local tax exemption to make it easier for individuals to build accessory dwelling units.

#### ***Historic Tenant and Homeowner Protections:***

- In a historic win by the Senate Majority, this budget includes some of the state's strongest tenant protections with the enactment of "Good Cause" protections. These guidelines state that:
  - A rent increase is presumptively unreasonable if it is greater than the annual change in CPI plus 5%, or 10%, whichever is lower.
  - A lease can only be terminated for one of the good causes lined out within the bill.
  - Takes effect immediately in New York City, while localities in the rest of the state may opt in and provides for flexibility in defining the small landlord and high-rent exemptions.
  - Sunsets in ten years.
  
- The SFY 2024-25 Enacted Budget also establishes the crime of Deed Theft, to protect homeowners from having someone steal the title to their home through fraudulent or deceptive practices, often which are targeted towards elderly homeowners. This provision would allow for the prosecution of individuals who intentionally alter, falsify, forge, or misrepresent property documents unlawfully transfer ownership rights of real property.
  
- The SFY 2024-25 Enacted Budget also includes crucial funding towards affordable housing and homeowner protections, such as:
  - \$140 million in capital funding for NYCHA,
  - \$80 million to support Mitchell-Lamas and \$75 million to support public housing authorities outside of New York City.
  - \$40 million in the Homeowner Protection Program (HOPP)
  - A total of \$10 million in Eviction Protection Funding in New York City and \$40 million for outside New York City

### *Needed New York City Specific Housing Advances:*

- The Enacted Budget includes an extension of the 421a construction completion deadline until 2031 to ensure that vested projects that had started construction prior to the expiration of 421a are able to continue.
- It also implements 485x, a new version of 421a, to build new multifamily buildings across New York City with stronger labor and wage standards and requires levels of affordability. It also lifts the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) cap to allow for higher density buildings.
- This budget includes a pilot program to legalize basement and cellar apartments within identified geographic locations in the City of New York and to ensure those apartments are brought up to code to allow individuals to live in them safely.
- And, it builds on previous conference wins to include a tax incentive program for Commercial Conversions with higher affordability requirements.

### **Supporting Working Families and Making Daily Life More Affordable**

In this year's state budget, the Senate Democratic Conference continued its efforts to ensure New York remains affordable and opportunity-filled for working and middle class families to put down roots. This year, those measures included:

- A historic \$350 million for a new supplemental tax credit for families eligible for the Empire State Child Tax Credit to provide direct support to working families, and continues to implement the lowest Middle-Class Tax rate in over 70 years, saving average New Yorkers millions of dollars.

- Allowing children ages 0-6 to remain continuously enrolled in Medicaid or Child Health Plus without having to redetermine eligibility, to ensure children have stable and affordable health insurance for their first years.
- Advances \$50 million for customers enrolled in the NYSEERDA EmPower+ Program to electrify their homes, providing subsidies to guarantee customers don't spend more than 6% of their income on an electric bill.
- Thanks to the Senate's efforts, this budget will also include long overdue and critical Tier 6 reform by changing the final average salary calculation window for Tier 6 members from five to three years to help incentivize workforce retention.
- The successful Senate inclusion of a 2.84% COLA for Human Services includes a 1.7% target salary increase for specific support, direct care, clinical, and non-executive administrative staff. This represents a notable increase over the Executive's 1.5% COLA proposal.
- \$50 million in transformative new funding for Anti-Poverty Efforts in Rochester, Syracuse and Buffalo.

***Access to Affordable Child Care:***

- The Enacted Budget includes \$1.78 billion for the New York State Child Care Block Grant, an increase of \$754.4 million, which will provide subsidies for 119,000 eligible children.
- It further includes \$280 million in underutilized federal pandemic funds to continue the Workforce Retention Grant program and provide another round of bonus payments to employees at 14,000 programs statewide.
- The Enacted Budget will also continue \$6.25 million for the Child Care Facilitated Enrollment program in New York City and \$5.6 million to the rest of the state. This program is designed to help qualifying working parents get access to child care in New York City.

## **Spurring Economic Growth and Supporting New York Small Businesses**

In ongoing efforts to bolster New York's economy from the ground up, New York State Democrats are continuing to invest in small businesses and development at all levels of the economy. This year's state budget includes:

- Empire AI, a pioneering consortium to develop and inaugurate a cutting-edge artificial intelligence computing center in Buffalo, with statewide partners to ensure New York's leadership in the burgeoning AI space.
- Thanks to the Senate Majority, this Enacted Budget will also include the "Newspaper and Broadcast Media Jobs Program." This will secure several key measures to support and promote local media:
  - It will create a personal income and corporate franchise tax credit for certain qualifying, independently owned print media or broadcasting entities, including those that have experienced workforce or circulation decline in the last five years.
  - It places a total cap on the credit per entity of \$300,000, and an annual cap of \$30 million. It sets aside \$4 million to provide a \$5,000 credit for the hiring of new employees, and \$26 million set aside for the retention of current staff. Half of the funds will be set aside specifically for those with 100 or fewer employees.
- This budget adds \$365,000 over the Executive proposal in additional funding for the Minority and Women-Owned Business Development lending program, for a total of \$1 million.
- It also increases the grant amounts for Entrepreneurial Assistance Centers from \$175,000 to \$250,000 to support small businesses and MWBEs across the state and help establish



EACs in unserved areas.

- This budget successfully enacts the Retail Security Tax Credit, which helps small businesses make the investments needed to keep employees safe.
- The Senate Majority successfully added its investment of \$1 million for beginning farmers, along with \$1 million for socially and economically disadvantaged farmers.

### ***Cannabis***

- The Enacted Budget includes Senate Majority's proposals to support New York's Legal Cannabis Market, including:
  - Language to lower the medical cannabis tax rate from 7% to 3.15% and direct revenue to counties in order to keep them whole.
  - \$100,000 for the Cannabis Farmers Alliance, and \$50,000 for the Cannabis Association of New York.
  - Increased enforcement powers for the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) to enable cities and counties to crack down on illegal cannabis shops.

### **Investing in Mental Health Services and Access to Quality and Affordable Healthcare**

In a continued effort to support the wellbeing of all New Yorker's at every stage of life, the Senate Majority fought to bolster health care resources and continue investing in mental health services for everyone throughout the state. The SFY 2024-25 budget includes:

### ***Health***

- \$7.5 billion invested in New York's health care system through modifications to the state's 1115 Medicaid Waiver to be used for promoting health equity, diminishing health

disparities, and enhancing access to primary and behavioral health care.

- \$800 million in support for distressed and safety-net hospitals.
- Continuing to increase the minimum wage for home care workers.
- Establishing minimum collection policies for medical debt, increasing eligibility for hospital financial assistance, a uniform financial assistance application for all hospitals, prohibiting hospitals from using immigration status as a criterion for financial assistance eligibility, requiring reporting on users of financial assistance, and clarifying that the notice requirements on medical credit cards apply to hospitals as well as other health care providers.
- Eliminating cost-sharing for insulin in commercial insurance for thousands of New Yorkers.
- Requiring commercial insurance to reimburse outpatient behavioral and substance use disorder treatment services at no less than the Medicaid rate.

### ***Mental Health***

- Providing \$55 million to establish 200 new inpatient psychiatric beds at State-run facilities.
- Investing \$33 million to enhance mental health services targeting first responders and aiding individuals with mental illnesses involved in the criminal justice system.
- Allocating \$19 million for mental health services for school-aged children.
- \$75.8 million increase for Crisis Services, which includes improving public safety by addressing serious mental illness, and providing critical care to young people.
- \$8 million increase to the Judiciary to support Mental Health Court operations.
- Extending the Mental Health Support and Workforce Reinvestment Program for an additional three years, allowing Office of Mental Health to reinvest savings from the

closure of State-operated inpatient facilities for workforce development activities and community mental health services

### **Supporting Reproductive and Maternal Health**

As New York continues to be a beacon for the nation amidst ongoing attacks on reproductive rights, the Senate Democrats used this year's State Budget to advance greater protections and resources for those who utilize these services, ensuring that they remain available to all who need them. This includes:

- Passing First in the Nation Paid Prenatal Leave, providing 20 hours of paid sick time for pregnant employees to use for their prenatal care visits.
- Codifying the Reproductive Freedom and Equity Grant Program to provide funding for abortion providers and non-profit entities to support increased access to abortion.
- Enacting the Community Doula Expansion Grant Program to provide funding to community-based organizations for recruitment and retention and startup and administrative costs to increase the number of community doulas.
- Allowing the Health Commissioner to issue a statewide, non-patient specific order to provide doula services for any pregnant, birthing, or postpartum individual.
- Requiring Paid Breaks for Breast Milk Expression in the Workplace for 30 minutes.

### **Fostering Children's Wellbeing and Advancing Youth Development**

The New York Senate Democrats have always understood that a brighter future starts with investments into our youth. Through this advocacy, the SFY 2024-25 Budget includes vital funding for youth programming and intervention services, with:

- \$103.2 million for After School Programs, an increase of over \$20 million from last year's budget
- \$10 million for the Youth Sports Initiative.
- \$1.5 million in additional funding for the Youth Development Program, for a total of \$15.6 million.
- \$1 million in additional funding for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act program, for a total of \$8.1 million.
- \$2 million in additional funding for Child Advocacy Centers, for a total of \$7.2 million.

### **Commitment to New York's Environmental and Climate Goals**

The SFY 2024-25 Enacted Budget continues the Senate Democratic Majority's commitment to meeting New York's climate goals by forging ahead on key investments and advancing modern policy to address the needs of the moment so we can not only stop, but also reverse the effects of climate change. This includes:

- Adding \$250 million over the Executive proposal for the Clean Water Infrastructure Act for a total of \$500 million.
- Successfully reversing cuts to the Environmental Protection Fund for an investment of \$400 million to support climate priorities across New York State.
- Expediting the siting and construction of electrical transmission and commercial energy storage through the RAPID Act, with the addition of Senate Majority proposals to preserve prime agricultural land, incorporate greater community input in the siting process, and improve labor standards.

- \$1 billion for the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and investing \$47 million to plant 25 million trees by 2033.
  - \$300 million in Capital for enhancing and improving parks statewide and \$150 million for the New York Statewide Investment in More Swimming (NYSWIMS) program to improve pools and build new ones in communities across the State.

### **Investing in Local Communities by Funding Local Government and Critical Infrastructure**

The New York State Senate Majority is building on record investments to infrastructure and local municipalities by restoring roads funding and putting more money into local government. This includes:

- \$50 million increase in AIM funding for local governments, the first increase in AIM in over a decade for a total of \$765.2 million.
- The Senate's successful inclusion of Sammy's Law, which will authorize citywide speed limits to be reduced at DOT's discretion, upon authorization from the New York City Council, allowing for the speed limits to be changed from 25 mph to 20 mph, and to lower special traffic-calming zones from 15 mph to 10 mph.
- \$2.5 million added by the Senate Democrats to establish and support the Dr. John L. Flateau Voting Rights and Elections Database of New York to assist in efforts to enforce the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of New York, increasing both accountability and transparency in New York's elections system, and \$5 million in assistance for Local Boards of Elections.
- Increased Funding for Public Transportation Across New York State:

- \$10 million in additional funds for Upstate STOA funding, for a total of \$333.2 million.
- \$4.2 billion for the MTA, an increase of \$140 million or 3.4 percent from SFY 2023-24.
- \$551 million for non-MTA downstate systems, a 5.4 percent increase in funding.
  
- Critical funding for Roads:
  - \$60 million in additional funding for CHIPS, for a total of \$598 million.
  - \$40 million in additional funding for State Touring Routes, for a total of \$140 million.
  - \$200 million per year for BRIDGE NY
  - \$150 million per year for PAVE NY
  - \$200 million for Pave our Potholes
  - \$100 million for Extreme Winter Recovery

### **Investing in Public Safety and Combating Hate Crimes**

The SFY 2024-25 Enacted Budget puts meaningful resources into public safety and the protection of all New Yorkers, of all backgrounds. This year's funding builds on previous Senate Majority efforts by:

- Preventing hate crimes:
  - Expanding the range of offenses that can be prosecuted as hate crimes.
  - Investing an additional \$35 million in the Securing Communities Against Hate Grant to safeguard houses of worship, religious schools, and other vulnerable locations.

- Enhancing public safety with strategic community investments:
  - Allocating \$347 million to continue efforts to reduce and prevent gun violence in New York.
  - Providing \$35.7 million to combat and prosecute domestic violence crimes.
  
- Reducing recidivism and improving workforce reentry:
  - Investing \$7.1 million to provide more intensive supervision for individuals on parole through the Supervision Against Violent Engagement (SAVE) program
  - Expanding transitional housing and college programming across all state prisons.
  - \$1 million for transportation for visitors to and from State Correctional Facilities.
  
- Strengthening street safety through new initiatives:
  - Implementing measures to combat toll evasion on roads and fare evasion on subways, commuter rails, and buses, including cracking down on vanish plates and fraudulent paper plates.
  
- Combatting Retail Theft Crimes:
  - Creates a Class E felony for assaulting a retail worker.
  - Allowing for aggregation of retail theft crimes to make it easier to prosecute repeat offenders.
  
- Fighting to Prevent the Aggravated Harassment of Transit Workers:
  - This budget creates a new Class A misdemeanor, Aggravated Harassment in the Second Degree, which would make it a crime for an individual to intentionally subject a transit

worker to unlawful physical contact.

- Combatting AI Deep Fakes:
  - Protecting against Sexually explicit Artificial Intelligence- expands the existing statutory right to privacy, which says that it is unlawful to use a person's name, portrait, or picture for commercial advertising without consent, by adding "likeness and voice" to the list of protected characteristics.
  - Combatting the use of Deep fakes in Elections- the legislation requires distributors or publishers of "materially deceptive" political communications to disclose the use of digitization. It also gives candidates a private right of action to seek injunctive relief and court and attorneys' fees.
  
- Continuing Funding into AAPI Equity:
  - The Senate fought to include \$30 million for AAPI Equity Coalition priorities for crisis intervention initiatives and community-based programs to combat bias crimes.
  
- Ensuring Limo Safety:
  - The Senate fought to enact the Limousine Passenger Safety Task Force's recommendations, including increasing the minimum fine for operating a stretch limousine that has been suspended with an out-of-service defect, requiring stretch limos to be equipped with a window break tool as well as a fire extinguisher, equipping stretch limos with anti-intrusion and roll-over protections, improving safety data reporting and requiring a pre-trip safety briefing for limo passengers.

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