



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Rob Rolison

## Rolison Delivers on Key Public Safety, Affordability, Environmental Priorities with Budget Votes

ROB ROLISON April 23, 2024



Senator Rob Rolison (39th District-Poughkeepsie) addresses colleagues on the Senate floor on April 19.

State spending plan will not raise income taxes; targets shoplifting, expands hate crimes, cracks down on illegal pot shops

Senator Rob Rolison (39th District) today announced that he delivered on key priorities for constituents in the recently approved fiscal year 2024-2025 New York State budget. The \$237 billion spending plan consists of two categories of legislation: appropriations and Article VII language bills which ties funding to specific policies. Rolison contributed bipartisan affirmative votes to Public Protection and General Government (S.8305C); Capital Projects (S.8304C);

Transportation, Economic Development and Environmental Conservation (S.8308C), and more. The budget does not raise personal income-tax rates and lowers out-of-pocket costs on common healthcare needs such as insulin. Rolison also voted to support first-in-the-nation paid prenatal leave for expectant mothers. This is his second time debating a state budget as senator since taking office in 2023.

The FY2024-25 state budget cracks down on shoplifting and organized retail theft, an issue which 76% of New Yorkers see as a "major problem" in a new Siena College Research Institute [survey](#). The budget makes assault on a retail worker a Class E felony and creates the new offense of fostering the sale of stolen goods, a Class A misdemeanor.

Rolison voted to approve \$25 million for State Police anti-retail-theft teams to prevent organized criminal gangs from robbing stores. The state spending plan also protects essential workers by increasing penalties for harassment of transit employees, including conductors, ticket inspectors, train operators, and others. The bill expands the list of offenses eligible as hate crimes by 23. Reported hate crimes reached a five-year high in 2022, according to publicly available data on the state's [Hate Crimes Dashboard](#).

The budget additionally empowers local law enforcement to close illegal marijuana dispensaries throughout the state. There are approximately 2,000 illegally operated pot shops in New York City alone. Rolison is a member of the Senate's Cannabis Subcommittee and has made curtailing illicit sellers a top priority.

"This state budget takes important steps to address crime and public safety. As a retired former police officer who served his community for 26 years, I understand that nothing else matters unless New Yorkers feel safe. Albany still has a long way to go to improve New York's broken criminal justice system, including changing the law to expand judges' discretion to consider dangerousness in sentencing, something no other state prohibits, but the policies contained in the final budget document represent pragmatic, common-sense steps toward reform," said Rolison.

The state budget devotes millions of dollars in investments to new capital projects, such as road repaving, infrastructure for drinking water, library construction, arts and cultural facilities, parks and historic preservation, and public-transit resiliency – including \$20 million in reimbursement payments to the MTA for construction along Metro-North's Hudson Line, which runs through the 39th District. In 2023 a weather-related mudslide along the route disrupted Metro-North and Amtrak passenger service for days. The Capital Projects budget bill Rolison supported also raises the state share of wastewater-improvement financing by \$1.25 million.

"The health and safety of New Yorkers is not up for debate. These capital projects will support clean drinking water and pollution reduction, fix our state roads, support the arts, expand state parks, and build and maintain public libraries. I am proud to stand with a bipartisan coalition of legislators who fought for and delivered on a wide range of much-needed capital funding for Hudson Valley and statewide priorities," said Rolison. "Restoring \$60 million the governor cut from our Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) to fill potholes and repave roadways was especially important. I've been saying for months that the condition of our state roads is appalling, and I'm glad to see increased investments for drivers in the Department of Transportation's Region 8 area of responsibility."