



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lea Webb

## FY 2024-25 Budget & Legislative Highlights

LEA WEBB June 26, 2024

| ISSUE: [FY 2024 STATE BUDGET](#)

A dark blue rectangular graphic with white text and a logo. At the top, it reads "New York State Senator" in a smaller font, followed by "LEA WEBB" in a large, bold, sans-serif font, all enclosed within a white rectangular border. Below this, the text "NYS FY 2024-25" is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font, followed by "Budget & Legislative Highlights" in a slightly smaller, bold, sans-serif font. In the bottom right corner, there is a circular seal of the New York State Senate, featuring a central figure and the words "NEW YORK STATE" and "SENATE" around the perimeter.

**[\\*Click HERE to Watch Senator Lea Webb's FY 2024-25 Budget Virtual Town Hall\\*](#)**

**Affordability & Supporting  
Working Families**

**BUDGET WINS:** *In the FY 2024-2025 Adopted Budget, Senator Lea Webb fought for key policy measures to promote affordability in New York, with an eye particularly towards the struggles facing working families in the Southern Tier. This includes supporting working families through affordable child care, utility and energy savings programs, healthcare access, workers rights and more, thanks to Senator Webb's advocacy.*

- **Refundable Child Tax Credit.** Secures \$350 million to support affordability of childcare, putting money directly back into working families' pockets.
- **New York State Child Care Block Grant.** Provides \$1.78 billion to help provide services to over 100k kids throughout the state.
- **Paid Prenatal Leave.** Establishes the first-in-nation paid prenatal leave by providing 20 hours of paid sick/personal leave for prenatal care, in a huge step for supporting expecting mothers in the workforce.
- **Paid Breaks for Breast Milk Expression.** Requires 30 minutes of paid break for nursing mothers to pump in the workplace.

*Senator Lea Webb fought to restore key funding to health and mental health providers and ensure more affordable access to care throughout New York. This includes:*

- **Combatting Medical Debt.** Advances notable medical debt reforms that help shield people from being denied care on the basis of what they owe by increasing the eligibility threshold for financial assistance, clarifying that immigration status cannot be a factor in determining financial assistance eligibility, and educating consumers that provisions on medical credit cards still apply to both hospitals and other health care providers.
- **Eliminating Copays for Insulin.** New York is the first state in the nation to eliminate copays for insulin, which will help ensure that those who rely on this life-saving medication do not face financial hardship as a result.

- **Cost of Living Adjustment for Workers.** Establishes a 2.84% Cost-of-Living Adjustment to help human service and mental health workers stay afloat. As we face a prolonged staffing shortage for these essential workers, this COLA provides a living wage to prevent them from leaving their jobs

*This year's budget also enacts key policy measures that help improve our climate resilience and make it easier to transition to green energy, while maintaining crucial affordability thanks to Senator Webb's advocacy. This includes:*

- **NYSERDA EmPower+ Program.** \$50 million for the NYSERDA EmPower+, with key ratepayer protections to help people convert to electric and ensure they do not pay more than 6% of their income on their utility bills.
- **Residential Energy Storage Systems Tax Exemptions.** Enacts a tax exemption on energy storage systems for two years, which will help keep costs down for consumers and make it easier for them to upgrade and electrify their homes.
- **Public Utility Law Project.** Delivers \$2 million to provide legal representation for low-income utility consumers who are being exploited by energy companies.

**LEGISLATIVE WINS:** *Beyond this year's notable budget wins, Senator Webb has been dedicated to advancing strong affordability legislation to protect ratepayers and help constituents keep their hard-earned cash by both reducing the cost of utilities and prescription drugs, and protecting consumers from predatory price gouging. Notably, this includes:*

- **NY HEAT Act.** Senator Webb co-sponsored this bill, which aligns utility regulation with state climate justice and emission reduction targets, reduces costs on ratepayers by eliminating the 100 foot rule, and ensures that no one pays more than 6% of their income on utilities.
- **Utilities to Adopt the Common Equity Ratio.** Senator Webb co-sponsored this bill to require utility companies to use standardized return on equity calculations, set by the PSC and

based on publicly available data, to set the fairest rates for the payer and prevent unjustifiable rate increases. It would also ensure that surcharges under the previous metric are returned to payers.

- **Utility Hikes Economic Impact.** Senator Webb co-sponsored this bill, which would require the Public Service Commission to consider the economic impact of utility rates and charges when evaluating utilities' proposed rate changes.
- **Affordable Payment Plans.** Senator Webb co-sponsored this bill to require utility companies headquartered in New York to establish a statewide program to provide eligible participants with affordable payment plans.

## Education (K-12)

**K-12 BUDGET WINS:** *In the FY 2024-2025 Adopted Budget, Senator Lea Webb fought to protect and expand funding for New York schools. These wins demonstrate Senator Webb's ongoing commitment to quality and equitable education, and reaffirm that our public schools deserve equitable resources. This includes:*

- **Restoring Cuts to Foundation Aid.** Restoring proposed cuts to Foundation Aid funding for schools throughout New York with an overall increase of \$934 million, and rejecting the proposal to eliminate "hold harmless," so that schools will not lose funding if they see a

decrease in their enrollment rates.

- For Senator Webb's district specifically, she delivered \$654 million in School Aid and over \$431 million in Foundation Aid, so that our students and teachers have the resources they need to thrive.
- For schools that didn't see an increase in Foundation Aid, Senator Webb delivered localized funding to help level the playing field.
- **Supporting a Foundation Aid Study.** Securing \$2 million for a Foundation Aid study to examine, evaluate, and recommend potential modifications to the calculation of Foundation Aid.
- **Continuing to Support UPK.** Providing \$100 million in Universal Pre-K funding to continue supporting the program and help ensure school districts throughout the state serve at least 90% of eligible four-year-olds.
- **Providing Free School Meals.** Delivering \$180 million an ongoing investment in the historic school meals program so that kids don't go hungry throughout the school day.
- **Supporting the Binghamton City School District.** Establishing a multi-year cost allowance to help fund much-needed renovation and reconstruction at Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School.

*This year's budget also includes key education policy measures to make sure that our public schools offer a world class education to all students, thanks to Senator Webb's advocacy. This includes:*

- **Reading and Literacy Requirements.** Promotes evidence-based instructional best practices for teaching students in Pre-K–Grade 3 to read, and giving them the best tools to succeed.

# Higher Education

**HIGHER EDUCATION BUDGET WINS:** *Senator Webb believes that public education should extend past twelfth grade—and that students should be able to access the degree they deserve, not the one they can afford. This budget makes significant investments in higher learning that increase accessibility and affordability. This includes:*

- **Historic Funding for SUNY.** Senator Webb and Senate Democrats used this budget to achieve historic wins that will keep New York’s premier public university system at the forefront of learning, and will better uplift the talent and innovation of New York’s future by:
  - More than doubling SUNY’s general operating aid from last year’s budget, for a total of \$169 million.
  - Support SUNY Hospitals by providing operating assistance to cover their debt service and \$150 million for capital projects.
  - Including a \$6 million increase in operating aid for SUNY community colleges, to support the unique needs and services of these vital institutions.
  - Restoring \$1.9 million for Education Opportunity Programs, which offer key academic and financial support to students throughout their college careers.
- **Tuition Assistance Program.** Makes historic expansions to the heavily relied upon TAP program so that more students can access its benefits.

- For the first time since 2000, the Senate “turned on the TAP” by increasing the minimum award from \$500 to \$1,000, expanding income eligibility, and extending awards to part time students to help ensure that college is more affordable for New Yorkers.
- Securing a total increase of \$53.3 million and \$5.1 million to close the TAP Gap.
- **SUNY Black Leadership Institute.** Provides \$350,000 for this program, which was championed by Senator Webb, to empower leaders in marginalized communities and promote their careers in the SUNY system.
- **Improving FAFSA Requirements.** Encourages universal application, so that students who qualify are not leaving potential aid on the table when they apply to college.

**LEGISLATIVE WINS:** *Beyond this year’s notable budget wins, Senator Webb has been dedicated to advancing legislation to round out the protections and resources afforded to this crucial sector. Notably, this includes:*

- **Underrepresented Teachers of Tomorrow Teacher Recruitment and Retention Program.** With Senator Webb’s vote, this bill establishes the Underrepresented Teachers of Tomorrow Teacher Recruitment and Retention Program to attract and retain underrepresented certified teachers in schools which have an underrepresentation of certified teachers by providing grants to school districts and teachers.
- **Bilingual Teachers of Tomorrow Teacher Recruitment and Retention Program.** With Senator Webb’s vote, this bill establishes the bilingual teachers of tomorrow teacher recruitment and retention program to provide grants for school districts to attract and retain bilingual, certified teachers to instruct in schools with a bilingual teachers shortage.

# Housing

**HOUSING BUDGET WINS:** *Amidst an ongoing housing crisis, the FY 2024-2025 Adopted Budget includes a historic housing deal advanced in large part by the Senate Democratic Majority. Thanks to Senator Webb's advocacy, this year's housing package includes holistic provisions that help address the unique challenges that our communities are facing. It includes the following:*

- **New York Housing For the Future Homeownership and Rental Housing Program.** Provides \$150 million for a subsidy program to develop permanently-affordable homeownership and rental units, all requiring prevailing wage for construction.
- **Creating a New Construction and Commercial Conversions Tax Exemption.** Municipalities outside of NYC may opt-in to exempt mixed-income and affordable housing, to incentivize the creation of housing options for struggling New Yorkers.
- **Establishing an Accessory Dwelling Unit Tax Exemption.** Allows municipalities to adopt an individual homeowner tax exemption on the extra assessed value from the creation of accessory dwelling units.
- **Good Cause Eviction Protections.** Upstate municipalities may opt-in to help keep tenants in their homes and shield them from undue rent increases, alongside \$40 million in Eviction Protection Funding and \$75 million to support public housing authorities in Upstate New York.

*In this multi-pronged deal, Senator Lea Webb, along with her colleagues in the Senate Majority, fought to include protections for existing homeowners in order to safeguard their livelihoods and help New Yorkers build generational wealth. This includes:*



- **The Deed Theft Prevention Act and Heirs Property Protection.** This budget creates the crime of Deed Theft so that law enforcement can more easily go after those who scam homeowners—particularly elderly and minority owners—out of their property.
- **Combating Discrimination in Housing.** This budget includes cooperative housing in the list of entities that will be protected from insurance discrimination and expanding the protections to liability policies.
- **Funding to Support Homeowners.** This budget restores cuts to crucial programs that both protect homeowners and help maintain the housing supply, including:
  - Restoring \$40 million for the Homeowner Protection Program.
    - \$40 million to support infilling of vacant properties across major cities in Upstate New York, including Binghamton.
    - \$25.18 million for the Neighborhood Preservation Program and Rural Preservation Program.
    - \$40 million for the Resilient and Ready Program to support home repairs to prepare for and respond to natural disasters.

## Health & Mental Health

**HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET WINS:** *In the FY 2024-2025 Adopted Budget, Senator Lea Webb fought to restore key funding to health and mental health providers and ensure more equitable access to care throughout New York, with an eye particularly towards the resource constraints facing working families in the Southern Tier. This includes:*

- **Medicaid Rate Increases.** Across numerous heavily relied upon health sectors, this budget builds on last year's rate increases to support the health of aging New Yorkers and those facing medical difficulties.
  - \$525 million for hospital services.
  - \$285 million for nursing homes.
  - \$15 million for assisted living programs.
  - \$800 million for Safety-Net and Distressed Hospitals, to help protect those last line facilities that serve many communities throughout New York.
- **Combatting Medical Debt.** Advances notable medical debt reforms that help shield people from being denied care on the basis of what they owe by increasing the eligibility threshold for financial assistance, clarifying that immigration status cannot be a factor in determining financial assistance eligibility, and educating consumers that provisions on medical credit cards still apply to both hospitals and other health care providers.
- **Eliminate Copays for Insulin.** New York is the first state in the nation to eliminate copays for insulin, which will help ensure that those who rely on this life-saving medication do not face financial hardship as a result.
- **Rural Health Access Development and Rural Health Network Development:** \$1.1 million total to support the health needs of rural communities and help ensure that all people can reach medical assistance in their time of need.
- **Tompkins County Rapid Medical Response:** \$300,000 total for this program which currently operates three rapid medical response vehicles throughout the County stationed in locations that were determined based on analysis of current response times for emergency calls.

- **Opioid Settlement Fund.** Provides \$90 million to reduce the impact of addiction and opioid use disorder in New York communities.

*Senator Webb has been the most outspoken representative for the Southern Tier when it comes to protecting reproductive freedom and promoting the health of New York families. Accordingly, she fought for this year's budget to include:*

- **Codifying the Reproductive Freedom and Equity Grant Program.** Provides an additional \$1 million in funding, so that abortion providers have the resources and support they need to do their work.
- **Establishing the Community Doula Expansion Grant Program.** Secures \$250,000 for community-based organizations to help increase the number of doulas, and allows the Department of Health to require access to doula services for any pregnant, birthing, or postpartum individual who wishes.
- **Supporting Family Planning.** Delivers funding for three programs to support holistic family planning: \$5 million for Maternal Health Grant programs, \$1 million for Family Planning Services, and \$1 million for Abortion Medication Grants.

*Thanks to Senator Webb's advocacy, this budget also enacts key funding and policy measures to ensure that all children receive vital care during their early formative years. This includes:*

- **Continuous Enrollment for Children on Medicaid.** Ensures that children from the ages of 0-6 can remain continuously enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP, without their parent or guardian needing to redetermine eligibility or add them to their own health plan.
- **Funding for School Based Health Centers.** Secures \$3.8 million for School Based Health Centers to bring quality healthcare directly to the children.
- **Hunger Prevention Nutrition Assistance Program and Nourish New York.** Provides \$23.3 million and \$4.3 million, respectively, to support greater access to food and nutrition

throughout the state. It further includes \$50,000 to **Broome County Council of Churches** for food distribution to those in need.

*Reflecting on Senator Webb's commitment to greater mental health care resources, this budget makes crucial investments to support existing services and respond to emerging needs. This includes:*

- **Mental Health Support and Workforce Reinvestment Program.** Extends the program for three years, and allows the Office of Mental Health to reinvest savings into workforce development and community mental health services.
- **Cost of Living Adjustment for Workers.** Establishes a 2.84% Cost-of-Living Adjustment to help human service and mental health workers stay afloat. As we face a prolonged staffing shortage for these essential workers, this COLA provides a living wage to prevent them from leaving their jobs.
- **Funding for Mental Health Treatment.** To respond quickly and effectively to health crises, Senator Webb supported this budget's funding for rural health access and intervention teams, as well as treatment and diversion programs, including:
  - \$8 million to expand Mental Health Court operations.
  - \$10 million in additional funding for the Mental Health and Criminal Justice package, which supports Law Enforcement & Mental Health Coordination Teams, as well as Court-Based Mental Health Navigators—a peer support program that bridges the gap between the court system and community services.
  - \$22 million to fund 200 new State Operated Inpatient Beds and meet this moment of heightened strain on the health system.
  - \$2 million for Crisis Intervention Teams, which are designed to de-escalate mental health crises.

# Farming & Agriculture

**FARMING & AGRICULTURE BUDGET WINS:** *Understanding that the Southern Tier relies on farms and agriculture to not only make a living, but ensure our families have access to fresh and healthy food, Senator Lea Webb fought to secure crucial funding for the economic viability and continued success of New York farms in this year's State budget. This includes:*

- **Farm Viability Institute.** Delivers \$2.2 million for grants to fund agricultural research and education projects, helping farms achieve long-term economic stability and protecting the future of New York's food system.
- **Northeast Organic Farming Association.** Includes \$200,000 to bolster communication networks amongst agricultural stakeholders, so New York farmers can thrive through shared knowledge and common goals.
- **Efficient Milk Storage and Transportation.** Secures \$24 million for dairy processing and efficiency grants through on-farm milk storage and transportation infrastructure.
- **NY Grown and Certified Program.** Provides \$20 million to provide families with high-quality food produced by local and environmentally-conscious farmers.
- **Nourish New York.** Provides \$4.3 million for this program, which helps deliver surplus farm fresh food to communities throughout the state that face food insecurity.

*Farmers are often considered the stewards of our environment, which is why Senator Webb also fought to include key funding and policy measures to protect agriculture as the State faces a changing climate, such as:*

- **Environmental Protection Fund.** Successfully restores direct support funding as part of the \$400 million Environmental Protection Fund, which includes:
  - **Farmland Protection Programs.** \$21 million to prevent the deterioration of arable farmland and support farmers in making climate-conscious decisions to protect their farms.
  - **Research for Sustainable Farmland and Forestry.** \$15.2 million for the Cornell University Climate Resilient Farms Program, \$500,000 of which will fund the Soil Health Program, and \$1.5 million for the Cornell & ESF Climate and Applied Forestry Institute.

*Senator Webb has been a fierce champion in the Senate to ensure that our agricultural policy uplifts farmers from disadvantaged communities. To that effect, this year's budget funds three programs to support the farmers who need it most:*

- **Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Farmers.** Provides \$1 million to support the livelihoods of disadvantaged farmers and allow them to make meaningful contributions to the New York State agricultural economy.
- **Beginning Farmers.** Secures \$1 million for those who are just starting out in agriculture to help new projects get off the ground.
- **Agricultural Youth Leadership Conference.** Delivers \$250,000 to prepare the next generation of farmers for their trade.

**LEGISLATIVE WINS:** *Beyond this year's notable budget wins, Senator Webb has been dedicated to advancing strong agricultural legislation to round out the protections and resources afforded to this crucial sector. Notably, this includes:*

- **Supporting Interstate and Intrastate Shipment of Cider.** Senator Webb cosponsored a bill to permit licensed cideries to ship up to 36 cases of cider per year directly to New York

residents, which—as consumers shift towards e-commerce and away from retail stores—enables cideries to better cultivate a customer base.

- **The Farm Ownership Succession Planning Program.** Senator Webb cosponsored this bill, which establishes the Farm Ownership Succession Planning Program to help farmers plan the future of their farms, which will promote their families' financial security and ensure the sustainability of New York agriculture.
- **The New York Healthy Incentive Program.** Senator Webb cosponsored this bill, which incentivizes fresh and healthy food purchases using SNAP benefits and increase local investments in farms. This program helps local farmers sell their crops and enables families to put healthy food on the table.

# Environment

**ENVIRONMENT BUDGET WINS:** *Senator Lea Webb continued to fight to protect our natural resources in the Southern Tier and the whole State of New York by securing crucial funding for environmental conservation, ensuring that New Yorkers and those who visit can continue to safely live in and enjoy our state. Thanks to Senator Webb's advocacy, this year's budget includes:*

- **Clean Water Infrastructure Grant Program.** Successfully restoring \$250 million for a total of \$500 million to provide safe drinking water for New York families.

- **Environmental Protection Fund.** Secures \$400 million for one of New York’s most important tools for protecting air and water quality and access to outdoor spaces. Senator Webb and Senate Democrats restored direct support through this fund by removing the Governor’s carve out for employees. The Environmental Protection Fund includes:
  - **Research for Sustainable Farmland and Forestry.** Provides \$15.2 million for the Cornell University Climate Resilient Farms Program, \$500,000 of which will fund the Soil Health Program, and \$1.5 million for the Cornell & ESF Climate and Applied Forestry Institute.
  - **Southern Tier Water Quality Protections.** Delivers \$1.2 million for the Eastern Finger Lake Coalition and \$3.5 million for Finger Lake-Lake Ontario Watershed to support healthy local wildlife. Also provides \$560,000 to support the Great Lakes Commission, to protect the natural waterways in our district’s backyard.
- **Tree Planting.** \$15 million to plant 25 million trees by 2033, improving air quality and building robust habitats for local wildlife.

*This year’s budget also enacts key policy measures that help improve our climate resilience and make it easier to transition to green energy, while maintaining crucial affordability and labor protections thanks to Senator Webb’s advocacy. This includes:*

- **NYSERDA EmPower+ Program.** \$50 million for the NYSERDA EmPower+, with key ratepayer protections to help people convert to electric and ensure they do not pay more than 6% of their income on their utility bills.
- **Residential Energy Storage Systems Tax Exemptions.** Provides a tax exemption on energy storage systems for two years, which will help keep costs down for consumers and make it easier for them to upgrade and electrify their homes.



- **The RAPID Act.** Makes it easier to build out the transmission lines that carry energy to consumers. This will give New Yorkers a stronger and more sustainable energy grid, reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, and lower costs for consumers—all while extending strong labor protections to support our workforce as we transition to a greener future.
- **The Build Ready Program.** Helps to make land usable for renewable energy developers, with added protections for farmland.

*Senator Webb has been a fierce champion in the Senate to ensure that our green energy policy takes disadvantaged communities into account and centers environmental justice. To that effect, this year's budget includes:*

- **Climate Smart Communities Grants.** Increases the state share of climate smart communities grants for disadvantaged communities and those experiencing financial hardship to respond and adapt to climate change.
- **Air Quality Improvement Fund.** Implements mitigation projects for disadvantaged communities negatively impacted by air pollution.

**LEGISLATIVE WINS:** *Beyond this year's notable budget wins, Senator Webb has been dedicated to advancing strong environmental conservation legislation to round out the protections and resources afforded to this crucial sector. Notably, this includes:*

- **The Climate Superfund Act.** Senator Webb cosponsored this bill and supported its passage in this year's budget to ensure New York's biggest polluters pay for the cost of adapting to climate change.
- **The NY HEAT Act.** Senator Webb cosponsored this bill, and supported its inclusion in the Senate's One House budget resolution, to align gas utility regulations with the goals of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). These measures will also help New Yorkers save money on their bills by ensuring no one pays more than 6% of their income on utilities.

- **The Just Energy Transition Act.** Senator Webb voted for legislation that would facilitate the phase-out, replacement and redevelopment of New York state's oldest and most-polluting fossil fueled generation facilities and their sites by the year 2030.
- **A Ban on C02 Fracking.** Senator Webb sponsored this bill to prohibit the use of carbon dioxide to extract natural gas or oil resources, which destabilizes and damages the surrounding environment and poses grave health threats to the community at large.
- **Environmental Protections for Cayuga Lake Salt Mining.** Senator Webb sponsored this bill to mandate an environmental review of current salt mining activities beneath Cayuga Lake, and impose strict regulatory and financial obligations to protect the local habitats from further damage.

## Economic Development

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUDGET WINS:** *Senator Webb has consistently ensured that the Southern Tier has a seat at the table when it comes to economic development opportunities so that Upstate is not only involved but leading the way on the latest innovation, and will continue to fight for better jobs and regional growth for her constituents and their families. Thanks to Senator Webb's advocacy, this year's budget includes:*

- **One Network for Regional Advanced Manufacturing Partnerships (ON-RAMP).** Provides \$93 million to connect individuals with the training they need to fill industry jobs and enter the trades.

- **Centers of Excellence and Technology.** Funding to support the breakthrough research happening here in our state in higher learning institutions, including:
  - \$14 million for the Centers of Excellence, including \$1 million for Cornell University's Center of Excellence in Food and Agriculture Innovation, and \$1 million for the Binghamton Center of Excellence.
  - \$15 million for the Centers for Advanced Technology, which support collaboration between private industry and universities in the development and application of new technologies.
- **The Empire AI Consortium.** Advances resources to promote researching ethical and public interest uses of artificial intelligence, and will help ensure that upstate is at the forefront of AI innovation. Binghamton University has been chosen as one of a select few institutions to partner with the consortium, and will lead the State in the technological field.
- **Entrepreneurial Assistance Centers.** Increases the grant cap for EACs by \$75,000. EACs provide key resources for burgeoning entrepreneurs, offering training and support in multiple languages for those wanting to start their own small business.
- **Minority and Women-Owned Business Development.** Secures \$365,000 in additional funding for the lending program, for a total of \$1 million, to keep these vital economic players afloat and ensure that our economic policy takes disadvantaged communities into account.
- **Newspaper and Broadcast Media Jobs Program.** Senator Webb fought for a new tax incentive to help keep independent journalism afloat, by supporting recruitment and retention of local journalists.

- **Funding for Chambers of Commerce.** Senator Webb successfully delivered funding for county chambers of commerce in her district so that the true economic drivers of our communities—small businesses—have the resources they need to thrive.
  - \$50,000 total for Cortland Area Chamber of Commerce
  - \$50,000 total for Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce
  - \$50,000 for Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce
- **High Technology Matching Grants Program.** Secured \$12 million to support three programs—the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program, the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) program, and the Security Through Advanced Research and Technology (START) initiative—to help small businesses engage in federal research opportunities and explore the potential to commercialize their company.
- **Tourism Matching Grants.** Provided \$3.5 million in additional funding for these grants, which the counties of Tompkins, Cortland, and Broome can apply for a portion of this funding to stimulate the tourism economy in the 52nd Senate District.

## Civil & Human Rights

**CIVIL & HUMAN RIGHTS BUDGET WINS:** *With Senator Webb's support, this budget looks to tackle broader social needs—such as voting rights, racial justice, and economic justice through reducing*

*poverty, and educational initiatives—to support marginalized communities and recognize the unique experiences of those in the Southern Tier who continue to face adversity and disenfranchisement. That includes:*

- **Anti-Poverty Initiatives.** Funds several efforts to combat poverty and give vital resources to underserved communities, especially children. This includes:
  - \$300 million for Summer Food to address food insecurity among lower-income students.
  - \$23.3 million and \$4.3 million for the Hunger Prevention Nutrition Assistance Program and Nourish New York, to support greater access to food and nutrition throughout the state.
  - \$50,000 to Broome County Council of Churches for food distribution to those in need.
  - \$180 million an ongoing investment in the historic school meals program so that kids don't go hungry throughout the school day.
  - \$7.2 million for Child Advocacy Centers to protect the rights and needs of New York children.
- **The Dr. John L. Flateau Voting Rights and Elections Database.** This provision is a key part of ensuring New York's compliance with the John Lewis Voting Rights Act—with \$2.5 million to promote marginalized communities' participation in democracy.
- **SUNY Black Leadership Institute.** Provides \$350,000 for this program, which was championed by Senator Webb, to empower leaders in marginalized communities and promote their careers in the SUNY system.
- **Studying Reparations.** Secures \$5 million for the Commission to Study Reparations and Social Justice, to research the effects of slavery on present day society in New York, particularly for Black New Yorkers, and help the Legislature to take action in remedying

these damages.

- **Combating Discrimination in Housing.** Adds cooperative housing to the list of entities that will be protected from insurance discrimination, and expands these protections to liability policies.

*Senator Webb has also been a strong advocate for victims and those who are in need of representation. Accordingly, this budget helps to support survivors of domestic violence and bolster legal services to ensure a better functioning, fairer justice system. This includes:*

- **Supporting Victims of Domestic Violence.** Securing \$40.8 million to reduce domestic violence and support victims of domestic violence through evidence-driven, survivor-centered, and trauma informed interventions.
- **Legal Assistance.** \$3.5 million for Upstate Legal Services, and \$2.1 million for the New York State Defenders Association to ensure all New Yorkers receive a fair trial.
- **Public Utility Law Project.** Including \$2 million to provide legal representation for low-income utility consumers who are being exploited by energy companies.
- **Employment in the Southern Tier.** Delivering \$100,000 for Cornell University's Criminal Justice Employment Initiative to offer formerly incarcerated individuals support in finding employment.

*Senator Webb has been a strong leader for the Southern Tier and state when it comes to protecting reproductive freedom and promoting the health of mothers and babies. Accordingly, she fought for this year's budget to include:*

- **Codifying the Reproductive Freedom and Equity Grant Program.** Provides an additional \$1 million in funding, so that abortion providers have the resources and support they need to do their work.

- **Supporting Family Planning.** Delivers funding for three programs to support holistic family planning: \$5 million for Maternal Health Grant programs, \$1 million for Family Planning Services, and \$1 million for Abortion Medication Grants.

**LEGISLATIVE WINS:** *Beyond this year's notable budget wins, Senator Webb has been dedicated to advancing strong legislation to improve the representation of all people, across all forums. This includes ensuring that the sacred right to vote is unimpeded.*

- **Democracy Preservation Act.** Senator Webb voted to ban political spending by foreign-influenced business entities in New York's state and local elections, to ensure that New Yorkers are in full control of their democratic representation.
- **Crimes of Voter Deception and Suppression.** This bill, co-sponsored by Senator Webb, prohibits deceptive practices and the suppression of voters, while increasing penalties for violations of the elective franchise.
- **Joining Multistate Voter List Maintenance Organizations.** With Senator Webb's vote, this bill authorizes the State Board of Elections to join a multistate voter list maintenance organization (such as ERIC) to help ensure the voter rolls are as up to date as possible.
- **Portable Polling Locations for Early Voting.** Senator Webb cosponsored this bill to allow counties to establish portable polling places for early voting, which will improve all New Yorkers' ability to cast their ballot.
- **Absentee Ballot Drop-off Box Locations.** Senator Webb cosponsored this bill, allowing local Boards of Elections to establish absentee ballot drop-off locations to provide voters with a convenient alternative option to submit their absentee ballots. This will increase voter participation in disadvantaged communities, making our elections more representative of the people of New York.
- **Refreshments at the polls.** Senator Webb voted to allow snacks and non-alcoholic drinks to be given to voters waiting in line at the polls. These comfort measures will increase voter

turnout.

*As the first Black woman to represent the Southern Tier in the State Senate, Senator Webb has consistently fought to address the unique barriers and higher rates of discrimination that Black women and mothers face in the healthcare system.*

- **Health Equity Impact Assessments.** Sponsored by Senator Webb, this groundbreaking legislation would ensure that the availability of reproductive health services and maternal health care are taken into account when it comes to proposed mergers, closures, and other similar changes to health facilities.
- **Maternal Health Care and Birthing Standards Workgroup.** Sponsored by Senator Webb, this would create a workgroup to study, evaluate, and make recommendations on the development of standards to ensure quality, culturally appropriate care for all perinatal and birthing individuals.
- **Protection of Reproductive Health Information.** Senator Webb voted for this bill to govern companies that collect and sell healthcare information, and provide additional rights and protections to users related to the sale of their private health information.