



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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State Legislature Must Work to Make New York More Affordable in the New Year

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The New Year is just days away and with it the start of the 2025 state legislative session. As members of the Senate and Assembly prepare to tackle the many critical issues facing the state, we should make affordability a priority and commit to better controlling the size and cost of government.

Rising costs due to inflation, higher taxes and fees, and expensive state mandates are hurting hard working families and forcing more businesses to flee to friendlier states. We need to do more to promote economic opportunity, create jobs and limit the financial burden New Yorkers face every day. A proposal to lower the income tax rate by 2-percent for middle-class taxpayers and to double the current School Tax Relief, or STAR program, is a good starting point.

As part of the budget, we must also ensure that school funding is distributed fairly to all districts. Overdue changes to the formula used to calculate foundation aid for the state's 700-plus school districts must help ease the burden on local taxpayers.

The legislature should also take steps to revise the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, which mandates changes in how New Yorkers heat their homes, the appliances they buy and the kind of car they drive...among other things. While we all want to protect our environment, it is becoming clear the state's aggressive timeline to implement these drastic changes is unfeasible and unaffordable. We should delay these arbitrary, self-imposed deadlines and give the state time to develop a realistic and sustainable clean energy plan.

We can also do more to ensure access to affordable health care by phasing out onerous insurance taxes and rejecting a proposal for a statewide single-payer health plan, which would result in huge tax increases. For residents living in rural areas, we must support funding parity for small, community hospitals, such as Bertrand Chaffee Hospital in Springville, so that they can continue to provide essential care. Similarly, the legislature should protect funding for the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP) which empowers individuals with disabilities and chronic illnesses to manage their own care, ensuring independence and dignity.

Another essential role of government is public safety. Recent changes to our criminal justice system have prioritized the interests of offenders over those they have victimized. These changes have made it more difficult for law enforcement to keep our communities safe. It is time to reverse these misguided reforms that embolden criminals at the expense of law-abiding families and communities.

Finally, I am pleased to see the state is collaborating with local stakeholders to find new uses for facilities it owns but no longer utilizes, including the sprawling West Seneca Developmental Center and the now-closed Gowanda Correctional Facility. Albany has an obligation to find suitable alternatives for these properties, which will ideally return them to the tax rolls.

As we prepare to meet these challenges, I remain honored to serve as your representative in Albany. I wish you a happy and healthy New Year.