



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

Budget Update From State Senator David J. Valesky

DAVID J. VALESKY March 30, 2012

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The New York State Legislature has completed passage of an on-time budget for the second year in a row. Though it was another challenging budget, requiring the closure of a \$3.5 billion deficit, we were able to balance the budget without tax increases or fiscal gimmickry. In addition, overall spending was reduced for the second straight year, the first time this has happened in at least three decades.

Some highlights include:

- A \$805 million increase in K-12 education funding, including the shift of \$200 million in competitive grant funds to aid targeted at high-needs districts.
- Restoration of the EPIC program, which helps seniors offset the cost of prescription drugs.
- A focus on jobs and infrastructure, with state and federal funding of \$1.2 billion to accelerate rehabilitation or replacement of 115 bridges and 2,000 miles of road and pavement projects. This will address the serious deficiencies in our infrastructure and create hundreds of jobs in the process.

- Funding for a second round of Regional Economic Development Council awards. Central New York was a big winner in the inaugural round, and we will have the opportunity to compete again next year.
- Badly needed capital funding to rehabilitate state parks across New York. 83 percent are deteriorating, and this initiative will help enhance visitors' experiences with the hope of drawing even more visitors each year.
- Efficiency measures to consolidate back office functions, centralize the purchasing process, and eliminate or consolidate several inactive boards, with the result of millions of dollars in savings each year.
- Significant mandate relief for local governments through a phased-in state takeover of the growth of Medicaid costs, saving \$1.2 billion over the next five years.

For more information about the budget, you can visit the Division of Budget website at www.budget.ny.gov or contact my office