



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ted O'Brien

## Senator O'Brien, Local Leaders "Stand Up for Upstate" in Budget Negotiations

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**ROCHESTER, N.Y.** – Senator Ted O'Brien, along with local government and school district officials, came together to state their concerns about the status of current state budget negotiations. Senator O'Brien believes that the needs of upstate New York are not being appropriately addressed in the budget proposals being advanced, particularly by the State Senate.

“Upstate, and particularly the Rochester and Finger Lakes region, have some great things to build on as we revitalize our economy, but we can not allow the current state budget negotiations to derail this momentum. Property taxes continue to be one of our region’s main obstacles, and the Senate budget resolution does little to address the challenges we face here in upstate New York,” Senator O’Brien said. “This is particularly evident by the failure to restore education funding for upstate public schools, and state aid to upstate localities. Unfortunately, the Senate Majority Coalition’s leadership has chosen to focus on appeasing powerful downstate interests at the expense of upstate communities. This is completely unacceptable.”

Local government and public school district leaders also spoke out on concerns with the current state of budget negotiations:

*Hon. Lovely Warren, Mayor of the City of Rochester:*

"I want to thank Senator O'Brien for understanding that equity is a key issue for upstate and particularly for the City of Rochester. I appreciate Senator O'Brien for standing side by side with me to fight for an equitable AIM aid formula to bring critically needed resources to Rochester."

*Jody Siegle, Executive Director of the Monroe County School Board's Association:*

"Our representatives in Albany need to remember that 60 percent of the school children in New York State live outside of New York City, and fewer than 3 percent of the state's students attend charter schools. New York City's issues should not drive the education budget decisions and legislative priorities for the rest of the state."

*Mike Pero, Superintendent of Pittsford Central School District:*

“It saddens me that our governor can claim a \$2 billion surplus and spend it on new initiatives prior to paying back the debt owed to schools. Since 2010, Pittsford has lost over \$14 million due to GEA alone and are once again looking at budget cuts.”

*Michael Midey, Superintendent of Bloomfield Central School District:*

“When introduced five years ago, the GEA was supposed to be a two year budget item to help eliminate a gap in the state budget. Five years later, the Bloomfield School District has lost over \$6 million in state aid from the GEA. All this has come at a cost to the education we offer our students. The Senator has demonstrated his understanding of how the Gap Elimination Adjustment has devastated education in a number of districts he represents. Senator O’Brien continues to work towards the eradication of the Gap Elimination Adjustment and as the advocate for the students of the East Bloomfield Central School District, I appreciate his efforts.”

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*Senator O’Brien represents the 55th district in the Senate, which is made up of the eastern half of Monroe County and the western half of Ontario County, including much of the city of Rochester.*

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