



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Gustavo Rivera

State Senator Gustavo Rivera Speaks on the Senate's Passing of the 2014 - 2015 Budget

GUSTAVO RIVERA April 1, 2014

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*Commends funding for a number of important Health and Educational policies and programs;
Expresses Disappointment Regarding Campaign Finance Reform and New Requirement for
Bronx Hospital Projects*

(Albany, NY) - Senator Gustavo Rivera (D-Bronx) joined his colleagues in the State Senate to vote on the ten bills of the 2014-2015 Budget. Senator Rivera voted against two of the budget bills, specifically the Revenue bill (S.6359d) and the General Government bill (S.6355d.)

2014-2015 BUDGET

"I commend Governor Cuomo and the Legislature on passing an on-time budget for the fourth year in a row. I'm thrilled that the 2014-2015 Budget includes and expands funding for many important policies and programs, including the Basic Health Plan and universal pre-kindergarten (UPK.) However, this Budget is nowhere near perfect and does not adequately address a number of issues that are important to New Yorkers, including campaign finance reform and the DREAM Act."

HEALTH

"I am very pleased that this year's Budget took various steps towards ensuring that a greater number of New Yorkers have access to quality and affordable healthcare. Not only did this Budget continue to fund our State's Health Benefits Exchange, but it also establishes a Basic Health Plan that will make health insurance coverage affordable for some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers. As well, this Budget establishes Out-of-Network protections that will prevent both

individuals and families from facing financial hardships due to unexpected medical bills. Additionally, this Budget allots funding for Consumer Health Advocates to assist New Yorkers in navigating health insurance plans, which is an important step in making benefits more accessible and understood by consumers. Lastly, as a vocal advocate for School Based Health Clinics (SBHCs), I am especially delighted that the Administration extended their exemption, which will allow SBHCs the time necessary to appropriately transition into managed care. This extension will ensure these vital health centers remain fiscally viable so they may continue to provide our State's neediest children with critical and cost effective health services."

EDUCATION:

"We took a great step forward in investing in our State's children with the \$340 million in funding provided to implement a statewide UPK program. The 2014-2015 Budget also ensures that public funds allocated to charters are being used appropriately by empowering the New York City and the New York State Comptrollers to now be able to audit charter schools."

THE BRONX:

"As a City and as a State, we must invest and protect our affordable housing stock. That is why I am elated that this Budget provides funding for facility rehabilitation at three Michelle Lamas in my district, namely Twin Parks NW Houses, Twin Parks SE Houses and Twin Parks SW Houses. This funding will help preserve and improve affordable housing that already exists in the Bronx while we continue to work towards comprehensive solutions to expand affordable housing statewide.

As well, I am very pleased that additional funding was provided for the SNUG program in the Bronx. The expansion of this program will help protect our youth and reduce gun violence.

In contrast, I find it very concerning that - with little input from the Bronx delegation - the budget includes a provision that adds new requirements for health facilities projects just in our Borough. While I understand the need for – and support – community input for development projects, this provision has the potential to delay and add hundreds of thousands of dollars to the cost of developing new health facilities in our Borough. The provision simply adds more bureaucracy to the process and has the potential to impact the quality of care that residents of the Borough receive from their medical institutions."

VIDEOS:

Senator Rivera speaks on the Public Protection General Government bill (S.6355d):

<http://youtu.be/Ap8qnOcFUMI>

Senator Rivera explains his vote on the Health and Mental Hygiene bill (S. 6914):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnKXmHKsJz8>

Senator Gustavo Rivera and Senator Jeff Klein session debate on the Health and Mental Hygiene bill (S.6914): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIWmEPaXtdU>