



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

## Seward Introduces Bill To End GEA

JAMES L. SEWARD January 30, 2015

| ISSUE: **EDUCATION, TAXES, PROPERTY TAX**



**ONEONTA, 01/30/15** – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I- Oneonta) today announced that he has introduced legislation ([S.2643](#)) to eliminate the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) which has cost New York school districts millions of dollars.

**“I voted against the GEA when it passed in 2009 and have been working to erase this curse on our local schools ever since,”** said Senator Seward. **“This hurtful policy was simply a cash-grab by the state that left schools reeling and trying to recover ever since. It needs to end now.”**

The GEA was enacted in 2009-10 to partially reduce the state's \$10 billion budget deficit. In 2011-12 it cut \$2.56 billion statewide in school aid. Over the past three years the GEA has been used to reduce state aid to school districts by \$6.35 billion.

Seward says the GEA has unfairly burdened school districts and taxpayers throughout the state, increasing the dependence on local property taxes and taxpayers to fund our schools.

**“School administrators, especially in low wealth-high need districts, have been forced to cut educational programs to make ends meet. This means students may not graduate on time, or get into the college they want, or be prepared to start a career after high school. The GEA has also forced a greater dependence on local taxes that are already higher than most homeowners and small businesses can afford,”** Seward added.

Senator Seward has consistently fought to restore aid taken under the guise of the GEA.

This year's state budget reduces the GEA by \$602 million - the single largest reduction in the GEA since it was implemented. Schools in Senator Seward's senate district have received \$8.5 million more in education funding than proposed by the governor.

**“Education issues are always front and center in Albany, and this year will be no different. One my top priorities is to make certain our upstate, rural districts receive their fair share of funding. The most meaningful step we can take to accomplish that goal, and relieve some of the burden schools and property taxpayers shoulder, is to end the GEA,”** Seward concluded.

The bill has been referred to the Senate Education Committee. Companion legislation has been introduced in the state assembly by Assemblyman Anthony J. Brindisi (D-Utica).