



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Hugh T. Farley

Sen. Farley Reports Senate Republicans Call for a Budget That Returns \$1 Billion to Schools by Ending the Gea This Year

HUGH T. FARLEY February 10, 2015

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State Senator Hugh T. Farley (R, C, I – Schenectady), along with his colleagues in the New York State Senate Majority, held a press conference in Albany today, and outlined their plan to abolish the notorious Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) and its impact on state funding to public schools. The Senate Republican Conference is proposing to return \$1 billion to schools across the state by accelerating the complete elimination of the GEA in the 2015-16 state budget.

The GEA was first imposed on New Yorkers in 2010 by former Governor David Paterson and the Democrats who controlled the Senate and Assembly. The entire Senate Republican Conference voted against the GEA because it created severe cuts to the bottom lines for public schools.

Since it was first approved, Senate Republicans have been leading the charge to abolish the GEA and deliver major funding increases to help mitigate its impact on education. The GEA cuts have been reduced by 62 percent – from a high of \$2.6 billion in the 2011-2012 budget to \$1 billion in the 2014-15 budget – to help restore billions of dollars in state aid to schools.

Last year alone, the Senate Republicans successfully negotiated an additional \$602 million – 86 percent more than the Governor proposed and nearly seven times more than what the Assembly proposed – to help schools overcome the GEA challenge created by Democrats. That funding represented a major step towards lessening the GEA's burden on school budgets, but there is still more than \$1 billion in GEA budget cuts anticipated for the upcoming fiscal year.

The Governor's Executive Budget proposes an overall \$1.1 billion increase in education funding over last year. However, that increase was not specifically tied to the elimination of the \$1 billion needed for this year's GEA.

The Senate Majority is currently preparing its own budget proposal which will include revenue estimates for the next fiscal year, reviews of all new initiatives, and sources of funding that can be found within the Executive proposal. The conference will be proposing a budget that uses the majority of the \$1.1 billion increase proposed in the Executive budget – up to \$600 million – and is working to identify the sources for the additional \$300-\$400 million needed this fiscal year to eliminate the GEA once and for all.