



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Kids, Not Cuts!

PATTY RITCHIE February 13, 2015

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

It's often said that opportunity is the key to success. That's why it's so critically important that we provide young people across our state with every chance to pursue their dreams. Doing that starts in the classroom.

As State Senator, I've been working hard to support our region's students. One of the major things I have been focused on accomplishing is ending the "Gap Elimination Adjustment;" a budget gimmick commonly known as the "GEA," which has cost schools across New York State upwards of \$8 billion since its implementation. First introduced in 2010—before I took office—the GEA was developed as a way to help close New York's then \$10 billion budget deficit. As a result of the GEA and budget cuts enacted under Governor Paterson, our schools—and their students—have suffered. It's these actions that have caused vital programs to be eliminated, created larger class sizes and robbed students of new opportunities.

In recent years, I've been fighting on behalf of students, their families, and their teachers, to reduce the GEA for school districts I represent by more than 78 percent. While we've made progress, it's a priority for me to end the GEA once and for all and currently, I sponsor legislation for its full repeal.

If you'd like to join me in showing your support for the end of the GEA, I invite you to sign my petition, which is [available here](#). If you don't have access to a computer, please call my Watertown office at (315) 782-3418 to have your name added.

Fighting to repeal the GEA is just part of the work I'm doing to support our schools. In recent years, I've been at the forefront of advocating for additional funding for schools across Central and Northern New York. In the four previous State Budgets, I've been successful in increasing funding by \$33 million more than the Executive Budget for the districts I represent. This year, I'll be continuing to advocate for

increased funding for our local schools in an effort to make sure our hardworking teachers have the resources they need to be effective and to make sure students have access to the opportunities they deserve.

We owe it to students to do away with the GEA, which for years, has denied our local schools the critical education funding they need. I hope you'll join me in standing up for them by signing my petition and letting Albany know we support kids—not cuts.