



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

State Legislators Applaud Citizens' Involvement To Restore School Aid

CATHARINE YOUNG February 24, 2015

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OLEAN – Although session duties in Albany Thursday will prevent area state legislators from attending the Olean Teachers' Association (OTA) public rally, they lauded teachers, community members, school boards reps and administrators for supporting their efforts to restore school aid.

“Regrettably, Assemblyman Joe Giglio and I will be unable to take part in the rally because of the previously set legislative calendar. We are scheduled to be voting on bills on the floor of the Senate and Assembly, and there is a joint budget hearing on public safety that will go on until very late,” said Senator Catharine Young, (R,C,I-Olean).

“We are going full throttle through the state budget process, and an agenda item on the top of everyone’s list is education. Our goal still is to have an on-time budget, so this rally is a way for our citizens to get involved,” Senator Young said.

“We are glad to see the local grassroots focus on giving our children the first-class education they need and deserve. Every school district and millions of taxpayers have been adversely affected by the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA), a fiscal gimmick that was instituted by the New York City-controlled Senate and Assembly Democrats and Governor Paterson when they were in power in 2010,” Senator Young said.

“I voted against the GEA because it has shortchanged our children’s learning opportunities. Senate Republicans have been fighting to eliminate painfully deep GEA education cuts since we took back the Majority in 2011, and we’ve made great progress. Last year alone, we successfully led the charge to roll back more than \$600 million in GEA cuts,” Senator Young said.

“Governor Cuomo has proposed a \$1.1 billion school aid increase this year, and Senate Republicans are calling for the full elimination of the GEA. We can identify additional revenues and find savings within current proposals so we don’t raise taxes but get rid of the destructive GEA once and for all,” she said.

Senator Young said she disagreed with the Governor’s decision to withhold state aid estimates known as school runs from districts because they need that information now to put their local budgets together. Senate Republicans have tried to help by constructing calculations based on data that schools regularly report to the state, such as transportation costs, and distributing these figures to the schools, but it only is part of the puzzle.

The Senator also said that comparing our local school districts to failing schools in urban areas, especially New York City, is unfair and gives the public the wrong impression.

“Our schools have high graduation rates and our teachers work hard in the classrooms for our kids. Certainly we need higher education standards, but over testing of students and demonizing teachers is not productive,” Senator Young said.

Assemblyman Giglio said “We need to get results for our children and their future. I fully support eliminating the GEA, and do not believe that a one size fits all approach to education policy is wise. It would be a disaster to implement such standardized policies in a state as unique and diverse as New York. I’m confident that by working together and voicing our collective concerns, Albany will get the message.”