



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Senate Begins Passage of Fiscally Responsible State Budget

CATHARINE YOUNG March 30, 2015

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*Budget includes a strong investment in education, tax relief to families and small businesses, and support for rural communities*

ALBANY - Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-Olean) announced today that the Senate has begun passing a fiscally responsible state budget that controls spending, monumentally increases state support for education, and reduces the tax burden to help create jobs and grow the economy.

“For the fifth consecutive year the state’s budget will be passed on-time and will include many initiatives that make our state a more affordable place to live, work and do business. The final budget lives within a two percent spending cap and rejects unaffordable tax increases,” Senator Young said.

“Senate Republicans led the charge to increase school aid. As a result, this year’s budget will provide schools a \$1.4 billion increase in overall school aid, and includes another dramatic

reduction in the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA). This landmark investment brings the total state support for education to approximately \$26.7 billion and ensures students continue to have the resources they need to learn and thrive. The final budget will provide a more than 50 percent reduction in the GEA and puts in place enough progress for full elimination next year, which is great news for our children's future," said Senator Young

"We successfully pushed hard to make higher education more affordable for thousands of middle-class New Yorkers by increasing funding for Tuition Assistance Program by \$45 million over last year and establishing a new merit scholarship program, with \$500 scholarships being awarded to 5,000 eligible students. Support for higher education will also be continued through a major new investment in public and private universities and community colleges across the state. Jamestown Community College, our local community college, provides an outstanding education and this year's budget will increase base aid by \$100 per pupil, representing a \$20 million boost in support for the state's community college system," she said.

"The 2015-16 state budget will ensure that millions of hardworking New Yorkers and their families see meaningful property tax relief. This savings will bring relief to the family budget and ensure homeowners are able to invest in their future in New York State. This year's budget will provide homeowners across the state with larger property tax freeze rebate checks and recipients of the STAR and Enhanced STAR programs will continue to see tax relief. Residents and businesses will also see tax relief as the onerous 18-a energy tax surcharge, a surcharge included on everyone's energy bill, will be removed through an accelerated phase-out," said Senator Young.

“The budget also continues support for job growth and economic development. We fought hard to ensure that economic development funds are available to communities across upstate, so that the state doesn’t choose winners and losers. As a result, a total of \$1.5 billion will be specifically allocated for Upstate revitalization. The Workforce Development Institute (WDI), a program I have long championed, will also continue to receive support to fulfill its mission. With the continuation in funding, WDI will be able to assist with training programs and other support services that have been vital to job growth and economic prosperity in our community,” Senator Young said.

“Finally, the budget delivers for our local farmers. Family farms have long been the backbone of our upstate economy, and this year’s budget reflects their continued importance. Several initiatives were included to strengthen agriculture, including modification to the tax code which will allow for family farms to be passed on to the next generation without severe tax penalties, strong support for the Harvest NY program, and continued support for the FarmNet program which provides assistance for farms to improve operations. By investing in innovative operations and supporting on-farm improvements we will continue to grow our farm and agriculture industry and our region’s economy,” said Senator Young.