



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

## New Year Will Bring New Legislative Session

SEN. PATRICK GALLIVAN December 22, 2015

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With the arrival of 2016 comes a new legislative session in Albany. As I look ahead to the New Year and the many challenges and opportunities facing our state, I will work with my colleagues in the Legislature to adopt a new state budget and will debate the merit of various pieces of legislation. I have highlighted below some of the issues that will be discussed.

We must continue to practice fiscal responsibility by controlling spending and reducing taxes and fees on residents and businesses. Over the past five years we have managed to keep spending growth below 2% thanks to a self-imposed cap which has saved taxpayers

about \$23 billion. It's critical that we continue to practice fiscal discipline and work harder to make New York a better place to do business. While we have had some success at reforming the state's burdensome regulatory system, there is a long way to go in improving the state's business climate.

Education is also priority. While I am encouraged by the recent reforms being announced to address the botched rollout of the Common Core learning standards and high stakes testing, we must ensure that our schools are properly funded in order to provide a quality education for all of our children. In the New Year, we must put an end to the Gap Elimination Adjustment, or GEA, which has devastated school districts across the state since being imposed in 2010. I will also fight for fair and equitable funding for all schools, including rural districts.

I also anticipate minimum wage to be a major issue during the upcoming legislative session. Despite the fact that the minimum wage will increase to \$9 an hour on December 31<sup>st</sup>, some in Albany believe the minimum should be increased to \$15 an hour. I am opposed to such an increase because of the negative impact it would have on consumers and small businesses and I will continue to work to oppose this jump.

We must also build on the progress we've made in revitalizing our economy by making major investments in our infrastructure. Rebuilding our roads and bridges will create jobs and will keep our economy moving forward. Again, it's critical that these investments be made in every region of our state.

As Chairman of the Senate's Committee on Crime Victims, Crime and Corrections, I will also focus much attention on our criminal justice system. We must make sure that our prisons are adequately staffed and have the necessary resources to protect residents, employees and inmates. Our state also faces an epidemic of heroin and opioid abuse which we must address

through enhanced treatment options, increased education and a crack down on the illegal distribution of these dangerous drugs.

These are just a few of the many important issues facing our state in the year ahead. As we prepare to meet these challenges, I remain honored to serve as your representative in the NY State Senate. Happy New Year.