



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

## SENATOR JOHN BONACIC RESPONDS TO GOVERNOR ANDREW CUOMO'S 2016 STATE OF THE STATE AND BUDGET ADDRESS

JOHN J. BONACIC January 13, 2016

"Governor Cuomo laid out his legislative and budget proposals today during his annual State of The State Address and Executive Budget Presentation. I anticipate having a substantive debate with my colleagues in both the Senate and Assembly as we confront the challenges facing New York, and begin to work through the Governor's proposals."

"The top issues that the Governor discussed in his address were, among others, increasing education funding, a substantial increase in infrastructure spending, investments in rural broadband, ethics reform and increasing the state minimum wage to \$15 per hour."

"I will continue to fight for all the students in my district, to ensure that our school districts receive their fair share of funding, and that they also receive the school aid figures in a timely manner, unlike last year. I was very pleased to hear the Governor say that he is committed to ending the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA), which has negatively impacted New York's students, and restoring the remaining \$434 million. The elimination of the GEA is a top priority of my colleagues in the Senate Republican Conference."

"I applaud the Governor for focusing on infrastructure investments. Upstate is in desperate need of infrastructure improvement, and it is my hope that we can direct funds to the areas

in most need. I was also glad to hear the Governor's plan to expand high speed internet access to rural areas. Expanded and reliable internet access will undoubtedly benefit communities in my district, especially Delaware and Sullivan Counties."

"Ethics reform was also discussed during today's address. I recognize the recent ethics issues that have plagued the legislature. That is why this past week I introduced a constitutional amendment which would ban outside income from active employment for legislators, and increase the legislative term from 2 years to 4 years, therefore providing the necessary stability for legislators. The taxpayers of this state need to trust that lawmakers have their best interests at heart, and these amendments will help restore that trust."

"As to the proposed increase in the minimum wage to \$15, the Senate has raised the minimum wage twice statutorily, with six increments, since 2004. The small business owners that I speak with, are reluctant to see an increase of this magnitude because they know they will have to lay off workers, and some may go out of business. My colleagues and I will do our due diligence before we agree to increase the minimum wage again."

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