



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

## Senator Martins Approves Multi-Billion Dollar Tax Cut, Record State Education Aid Investment As Part of New State Budget

JACK M. MARTINS April 5, 2016

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Senator Jack M. Martins (R-7th Senate District) voted for a new state budget which delivers billions of dollars in tax relief, provides a record amount of state education aid to schools, permanently eliminates the harmful Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) and makes significant investments in infrastructure and environmental protection. The fiscally responsible plan achieves these and other important objectives while staying under the self-imposed two percent spending cap for the sixth consecutive year.

“Once again, we’ve passed a fiscally responsible state budget that provides tax relief for Long Island families, invests in our schools and transportation network, and protects our environment,” said Senator Martins.

The budget includes an income tax cut for millions of middle class families that totals \$6.6 billion over the first four years. Currently, middle class income rates are at their lowest levels in decades as a result of a previous income tax cut Senator Martins supported. This measure would reduce them even further starting in 2018. Once fully phased in, middle class income tax rates will be at their lowest levels since 1948, providing an average savings of \$700 per taxpayer and an annual total savings of \$4.2 billion.

“Tax relief remains the number one priority for middle class families here on Long Island and throughout the state. This new plan builds upon previous tax cuts we’ve made and enables them to keep more of their hard earned money,” said Senator Martins.

Additionally, the budget provides a record investment in state education aid statewide, with Nassau County schools getting over \$1 billion in state education aid to fund vital programs, services, and operations to educate children. Equally as important, it permanently eliminates the GEA that took hundreds of millions of dollars away from Long Island school districts. The GEA was imposed in 2010 by Governor David Paterson and the New York City Democrats who controlled the Senate and Assembly at that time. Since taking office in 2011, Senator Martins has been leading the effort to deliver additional state aid and restore the funding Long Island schools lost under the GEA.

“Once again, we’ve made a record school aid investment which will benefit students and taxpayers. We’ve also achieved another one of our top priorities by completely freeing our schools from the burden of the GEA which never should have been imposed on them in the first place. Both of these are good news for Long Island schools,” Senator Martins stated.

To help working families, the budget includes a provision creating the country’s most comprehensive paid family leave program. Eligible workers can receive up to twelve weeks of paid family leave from their jobs to care for a sick relative or newborn child starting in 2018 under the program, which is entirely funded through employee contributions. The program, which is entirely employee funded, will help ensure residents do not have to make the choice between losing their job or going without a pay check in order to care for their loved ones. The budget also includes a multi-year, responsibly phased-in minimum wage increase which includes a safety valve that enables the Division of Budget to halt the increase if economic conditions cannot support it.

“Everyone of us will have a situation in life where we’ll want and need extended time off caring for a loved one, whether it’s the birth of a child, helping a relative recover from serious medical condition or spending time with them in their final days. No one should have to make the choice between providing that care or losing their job and going without a paycheck. This program will provide that safety net to employees without forcing businesses to pay for it. We’re also raising the minimum wage to better enable low income workers to support themselves but in predictable increments over a period of six years with protections to ensure that our economy can support it,” Senator Martins added.

Additionally, the budget also includes a number of other important initiatives, including record investments in transportation infrastructure to help improve our roads, bridges, and mass transit systems and create jobs, as well as in the state’s environmental protection fund to help ensure our families have clean water and clean air.

“Infrastructure is the lifeblood of our communities and economy, and it must be maintained and improved to enhance our economy and quality of life. Protecting our water and our environment is a necessity, not a luxury, and we’ve taken record steps to safeguard our most precious natural resources,” stated Senator Martins.

“Passing this budget builds on the progress we’ve made over the last several years and continues our focus on the right priorities; tax relief, fiscal discipline, and smart investments in education and infrastructure. No budget is perfect, but overall, this one will make life better in many ways for Long Islanders,” Senator Martins concluded.