



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael H. Ranzenhofer

New Budget Supports Students, Family Farms and More

SENATOR MICHAEL H. RANZENHOFER May 18, 2016

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Look for...

Senator Mike Ranzenhofer's
Monthly Column

...In your local newspaper
the third week of every month

Senator Ranzenhofer's column appeared in the Amherst and Clarence Bees on May 18th

As your State Senator, one of my top priorities is to support policies and initiatives that make Western New York a better place to live and raise a family. From making college more affordable to strengthening our vital agriculture industry, the new 2016-17 State Budget reflects my commitment to our community.

The new budget makes significant investments in our public colleges, universities and community colleges and takes steps to make college more affordable for both families and

students.

The final budget includes more than \$1 billion for tuition assistance and prevents a proposed tuition hike for SUNY students. These two proposals will help to make a quality, higher education more affordable for thousands more young New Yorkers and their families. Additionally, the fiscal plan increases funding for our community colleges.

On the other hand, the State Budget prevents bad education policy too. The budget rejects the use of taxpayer dollars to fund college tuition for illegal immigrants. The final budget excludes Governor Cuomo's proposal that would have cost state taxpayers \$27 million and reward people who are here illegally by giving them free college tuition.

Another commitment to the community involves new tools to combat the heroin and opioid crisis. Communities all across Western New York are now fighting one of the most challenging public health crises in generations with the rise in heroin and opioid abuse. The devastating impact of the crisis has been felt in every corner of our community, leaving far too many individuals and families heartbroken.

In the 2016-17 Budget, I was able to help secure \$166 million in funding to strengthen prevention, treatment, recovery and education services. This funding level is an increase of \$25 million over what was proposed in the Governor's Executive Budget.

This new funding will provide powerful new tools to help law enforcement, health care professionals and mental health experts throughout Western New York— all of whom share the common goal of overcoming this major public health crisis.

Lastly, an abundance of fresh, quality food and farm products is not only good for our families, it's also great for New York's economy. That is why I advocated for restoring important funding to help strengthen our family farms.

The proposed budget cut \$9 million from 30 key agriculture programs. The final budget restores this funding with major investments for agriculture research, marketing and education, as well as vital associations, including the Future Farmers of America.

The new budget makes college more affordable for our students, provides new tools to combat the heroin and opioid crisis, and supports our agriculture economy. As your representative in the State Senate, you can continue to count on me to support good policies to help strengthen our community.