



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Toby Ann Stavisky

## Senator Stavisky on Passage of 2016-17 State Budget

TOBY ANN STAVISKY April 5, 2016

“After more than 18 hours of deliberation, my colleagues and I have passed a budget,” State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky said. “The \$155.6 billion represents both the good and the ugly of New York State government. The good is easy to describe: a 6.5 percent increase in school aid, increase in the minimum wage, paid family leave, a cut in personal income taxes for the middle class, and a 2 percent increase for the higher education budget. For months, I met with CUNY representatives and appealed to Governor Cuomo on the importance of our CUNY schools. After months of hard work, we managed to prevent budget cuts to CUNY, boost funding to both city and state community colleges and ensure a freeze on SUNY and CUNY tuition this year.

“Despite some victories, there were also disappointment. Once again, ethics and campaign finance reform were ignored. What’s more troublesome was the lack of transparency. The budget was negotiated in secret at locations away from the capitol and away from the press by the infamous ‘three men in a room.’ Although the budget is supposed to be on our desks for three days to review, we did not see it until the early morning hours, the day after it was due. Thousands of pages explaining the \$156 billion measures had to be examined in minutes. I debated the higher education portions in the early morning, having been in session for 17 straight hours. This was not a bad budget, but it could have been better. The process, however, was dreadful.”