



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

Senator Larkin Highlights Weekly Actions In Albany With Vote On 2017-18 Senate Budget Resolution

WILLIAM LARKIN March 17, 2017



Senator Larkin Advocates for Hudson Valley in 2017-18 Senate Budget

Senator Bill Larkin (R-C-I, 39th District) cast his aye vote this week on the Senate's 2017-18 Budget Resolution. Senator Larkin advocated for many issues that could have a profound impact on the Hudson Valley concerning veteran's services, clean water, property taxes and more.

“The Senate’s budget resolution is a responsible and fiscally disciplined spending plan that will cut taxes, reduce fees and improve economic opportunities for all New Yorkers,” said Senator Bill Larkin. “I am particularly proud of the Senate’s efforts to support veterans, combat Lyme disease and protect clean water.”

Due to Senator Larkin’s advocacy, the Senate budget includes \$350,000 to assist Legal Services of the Hudson Valley in expanding their Veterans and Military Families Advocacy Project.

“The Veterans and Military Families Advocacy Project provides comprehensive free civil legal services to the Veterans living throughout the seven counties of the Hudson Valley,” said Legal Services of the Hudson Valley CEO Barbara Finkelstein. “As Senator Larkin knows the increased funding could assist us in advancing the dignity and self-sufficiency of Veterans in the Hudson Valley. We appreciate his ongoing support for the Veterans community.”

Senator Larkin’s efforts also helped include nearly \$8 billion to ensure New Yorkers have access to clean and safe drinking water. The Senate’s budget establishes the Emerging Contaminant Monitoring Act and creates a new Drinking Water Quality Institute.

“Since the PFOS contamination was discovered in the City of Newburgh I have continuously worked with the appropriate State agencies, local officials and my colleagues in the Senate to find both short term and long term solutions,” said Senator Larkin. “The actions taken by the Senate this week brings us one step closer to our goal of ensuring that all communities, including the City of Newburgh have clean water.”

Senator Larkin also fought to include an additional \$600,000 in funding to support research, education and prevention efforts to combat Lyme disease.

Senator Larkin Works to Reduce Property Taxes and Rejects Fee Increases

The Senate's budget proposal advances several measures to protect the significant savings provided by the School Tax Relief (STAR) program and would help small businesses save on their property taxes. The measure includes:

- Reversing changes made last year to the STAR Personal Income Tax Credit Program from reimbursements back to an up-front exemption effective for the 2018–19 school year;
- Addressing the significant delays of STAR payments by the state to taxpayers that occurred this year by requiring the state to postmark all advance payment STAR checks by September 15th, requiring the state to pay interest if they are mailed late, and reimbursing taxpayers for penalties or interest due to late school tax bill payments; and
- Making permanent the state's property tax cap – which has already saved taxpayers \$15.5 billion over the last five years -- and establishing a property tax cap for New York City to enable those residents and businesses to get needed tax relief.

The Senate budget rejects a number of onerous tax-and-fee increases proposed by Governor Cuomo, including new DMV fees, new taxes on internet purchases and a new surcharge on pre-paid cell phones. In addition, to help avoid future tax increases, the Senate's resolution imposes a statutory cap on state spending.

To help more seniors save money and choose to stay in New York during retirement, the Senate increases the private pension and retirement income exclusion from \$20,000 to \$40,000 for single taxpayers and to \$80,000 for married taxpayers, over three years. This would be the first increase to the exempt amount of private pensions and retirement since 1981 and save retirees approximately \$315 million.

Senator Bill Larkin Rejects Governor Cuomo's Free College Tuition plan.

The Senate improves upon the higher education proposals in the Executive Budget by making more middle-class families eligible for more financial aid, and giving students greater flexibility in school choice to promote success.

“Nothing in life is free,” said Senator Bill Larkin. “We must expand TAP to reach more students and our plan does that. Our plan helps make college more affordable for students and seeks to help promote partnerships with businesses and graduates in an attempt to relieve the mountain of student debt our young adults are faced with as they enter the workforce.”

The Senate invests \$109 million in a new E-TAP initiative that helps students in public and independent schools by increasing the minimum TAP award from \$500 to \$3,000 and the maximum to \$5,500. Income thresholds would also be increased to \$100,000 in 2017-18; \$110,000 in 2018-19; and \$125,000 in 2019-20. To be eligible for E-TAP, students would need a 3.0 GPA by the start of their junior year and take 30 credits over each academic year – which is a more flexible option for students unable to take a 15-credit semester as required in the Executive Budget proposal.

The Senate budget proposal also includes:

- \$10 million to expand TAP to include part-time community college students; and
- \$2 million in new funding for Graduate TAP, to help students who are in combined undergraduate/graduate degree programs.

The Senate budget establishes a new Task Force on College Affordability; requires private colleges to develop college affordability plans with the goal of lowering costs; and creates the New York State Tax Advantage Student Loan Repayment Program. This innovative measure acts like a 401k for student debt – enabling employees to put up to \$2,500 pre-tax each year

into an account specifically set up by an employer to help pay student loan debt. The employer would then match the employee's contribution and receive a tax deduction. The Senate also:

- Expands the STEM scholarship to include private institutions;
- Increases the tuition tax credit to a maximum of \$2,500 and the deduction to a maximum of \$50,000 of allowable college tuition expenses, over 10 years;
- Provides \$2 million in funding to support child care on SUNY and CUNY campuses to give access to students in need of care while pursuing a degree; and
- Provides a maintenance of effort provision that requires the state to fund SUNY and CUNY at no less than the prior year's funding level.

This week Senator Larkin honored the following individuals and organizations for their outstanding service and accomplishments to their community:

J. 950 - Honoring Jennifer Cline for receiving the distinguished National Board Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

J. 951 - Honoring Barbara Parnes for receiving the distinguished National Board Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

J. 952 - Honoring Meghan Rilley for receiving the distinguished National Board Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

J. 953 - Honoring Sabrina Delfinger for receiving the distinguished National Board Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

J. 954 - Congratulating Hilda Coleman upon the occasion of celebrating her 100th Birthday

J. 955 - Honoring Mary Ellen Matise as recipient of the Martha Washington Woman of History Award by the Washington Headquarters State Historic Site

J. 956 - Honoring Firefighter Don Cosman after 50 years of dedicated service to the Marlboro Hose Company

J. 963 - Congratulating Anthony Mancinelli upon the occasion of celebrating his 106th Birthday

J. 964 - Congratulating Timothy Ward upon the occasion of receiving the distinguished rank of Eagle Scout, the most prestigious of Scouting honors

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J. 966 - Congratulating Sean Curry upon the occasion of receiving the distinguished rank of Eagle Scout, the most prestigious of Scouting honors

J. 971 - Commending John Gore after 50 years of dedicated service to the American Legion Post No. 488

J. 972 - Commending Patricia M. Pskowski upon the occasion of her designation as Grand Marshal for the 2017 Village of Montgomery St. Pat's Ramble

J. 978 - Commending Joe and Mary Bonura upon the occasion of their designation for special recognition by Hospice of Orange and Sullivan Counties, Inc.

J. 983 - Congratulating Alexander R. Mott upon the occasion of receiving the distinguished rank of Eagle Scout, the most prestigious of Scouting honors

J. 988 - Commending Leadership Orange for hosting its 5th Annual Hall of Fame Awards Event & After Party, and paying tribute to this year's inductees

J. 994 - Honoring Irene Scaturro upon the occasion of her retirement after 40 years of distinguished service to the Marlboro School District

J. 1037 - Commending Senior Chief Mary E. Cavanagh upon the occasion of being named the 2017 Rockland Female Veteran of the Year by Rockland County