



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Gustavo Rivera

## Statement from State Senator Gustavo Rivera On Enactment of 2017-2018 State Budget

GUSTAVO RIVERA April 11, 2017

| ISSUE: **BUDGET BILL, BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS**

State Senator Gustavo Rivera (D-Bronx) joined his colleagues in the State Senate to vote on the 10 bills of the 2017-2018 Budget. Senator Rivera voted against six of the budget bills, specifically the Aid to Localities (S.2003-D) Transportation, Economic Development and Environmental Conservation bill (S.2008-C), the Public Protection and General Government bill (S.2005-C), the Education, Labor and Family Assistance bill (S.2006-C) and the Revenue bill (S.2009-C)

### **2017-2018 BUDGET OVERVIEW**

“After a tumultuous and flawed process, our State finally announced the passage of the 2017-2018 New York State Budget. Tax paying New Yorkers deserve a better process that genuinely delivers progressive results and does not only provide small steps and half-loaf measures preventing our State from properly investing in its residents and building a stronger economy.

Dismally, this year's budget left out key priorities New York desperately needs. It did not include the DREAM Act, ethics and campaign finance reforms, Campaign for Fiscal Equity settlement funding or measures to protect New Yorkers' health coverage from a repeal of the

Affordable Care Act through the implementation of a single payer insurance plan. It also revived the deeply flawed 421-a property tax break program that would cost New York City \$2.4 billion a year, while not creating nearly enough long-term affordable housing.

However, I am proud of the hard fight put up by my Senate Democratic Conference colleagues. Despite the fact that our leader, Senator Stewart-Cousins, was once again excluded from budget negotiations, we fought until the last minute to ensure that the voices of the eight million New Yorkers Senate Democrats represent, were heard and acknowledged. These efforts helped us secure important victories for New Yorkers, including raising the age of adult criminal responsibility, increased aid to local school districts, restored funding for ASAP/SEEK educational programs, \$6 million funding for the MTA and fully funding the visitation program at maximum security facilities which will continue to allow families to visit their relatives seven days a week.”

## **THE BRONX**

“I am very pleased to announce that we were able to secure the \$108 million funding to develop the Kingsbridge National Ice Center. The Kingsbridge National Ice Center is a project that I have diligently worked to bring to our community since its inception. Not only do I believe this project would serve as an economic engine for our surrounding neighborhoods, but more importantly, the developer has demonstrated at length a commitment to the residents of our borough by signing a historic Community Benefits Agreement. I remain committed to continue working with both the State and the City to ensure that the development of one of our more historic sites in order to uplift both our community and economy.”

## **HEALTH**

"I'm proud to have been on the forefront in fighting for the \$20 million to enhance safety net hospitals that serve low-income New Yorkers. This funding, while limited, will go a long way in helping hospitals that serve our most vulnerable communities.

On the other hand, it was disappointing to see that some my colleagues, even a few who are co-sponsors of this bill, voted down a hostile amendment I presented include the single payer bill in this year's budget. Some of my colleagues categorized my intervention as grandstanding. However, in saying that, they fail to recognize the critical implications that a single payer healthcare system will have for New Yorkers. As the Ranking Member of the Senate Health Committee, passing this policy proposal would represent a fundamental step in ensuring that every New Yorker has access to affordable and quality health care coverage, while saving New York State tax payers millions of dollars in the long term. I am committed to continue working along my colleagues in the State Senate and the State Assembly to finally make health care a right and not a privilege under the law."

#### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE:**

"In a historic decision, our State finally took action in removing itself from a dubious list of states that prosecuted 16 and 17 years old as adults. After a long drawn fight, our State's criminal justice system will finally focus on rehabilitating our youth population while protecting the public; not in placing children in a situation where they are more likely to be abused and to reoffend.

This victory did not come without some concessions. The measure will not become effective until 2018 and youth who do enter the system will have to wait 10 years to be eligible to seal their records, potentially affecting their ability to pursue a higher education or secure employment. However, the positives outlined in this measure outweigh the negatives and give our youth in New York who commit a mistake a second chance to grow into responsible

members of society, instead of simply locking them up. We would have not been able to finally pass Raise the Age without the unrelenting leadership of New York Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Senator Velmanette Montgomery, the sponsor of the original measure, and a number of dedicated advocates including Justice League NYC, AQE and ShutDownRikers.”

**Senator Rivera comments on S.2009C:** [Click Here](#)

**Senator Rivera comments on his amendment to S.2009C (Single Payer Bill):** [Click Here](#)

**Senator Rivera comments on S.2004D (Capital Projects):** [Click Here](#)