



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Rich Funke

Senator Funke Responds to the Governor's State of the State Address

RICH FUNKE January 3, 2018



"With a projected \$4.4 billion deficit this will be a challenging state budget where we will need to make hard choices. The State of the State lays out the Governor's preferred themes, but it doesn't fill in the blanks and as is always the case with Governor Cuomo-the devil is in the details. As such, I look forward to his budget presentation where we will find out what all of these proposals cost and how he proposes to implement them.

In the meantime, I would describe this speech as a mixed bag that closely resembles the old Western-“The Good, The Bad and the Ugly.”

On the good side, I was happy to see the proposal to invest \$175 million in new workforce development programs. Businesses in my area constantly report that there are a lack of workers for middle skills jobs, and hopefully this investment will help us address that shortage.

I am very glad to see the Governor join me in the push for term-limits for State elected officials. I sponsor several bills on this subject and I strongly support it as a way to empower the people and take influence away from professional politicians. Welcome to the fight Governor.

I am also happy to see the Governor propose a package of bills to address sexual harassment in our state-many of which closely mirror legislation that I sponsor with Senator Cathy Young and others.

On the bad side, I’m very troubled by the Governor’s new package of criminal justice reforms. Just last year he cajoled us to support his raise the age initiative and we have yet to fully understand how that will be implemented and what it will truly cost. Now he proposes essentially ending the cash bail system in our state among other things. He says this will make our system “fairer” I say it moves us closer to a system where sympathy for the criminal could start to outweigh safety for the community.

Finally there is the ugly side of this budget-the deficit and how we deal with it. The Governor vaguely talks about “reforming” our tax system. When I hear him use the words taxes and reform in the same sentence I automatically hear “higher taxes”. Let me be clear on this-I will not support any proposal that raises taxes on New Yorkers. Whatever the reason given-

Federal policy changes or the deficit etc.. there is no reason good enough to add even one penny to the heavy tax burden already borne by the middle class in our state. “

I look forward to the upcoming budget presentation and to working with the Governor and my colleagues in both houses to deliver a balanced and fiscally responsible budget that protects our core values.

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