



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo praises education & transportation funding in budget, believes more can still be done

SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR. April 4, 2018

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The New York State Senate has officially passed an on-time \$168.3 billion budget for Fiscal Year 2019 that addresses funding for schools, transportation, NYCHA, and more. While Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. praises the budget's attention to school funding, transportation and tax help for the middle class, he believes the process could be more transparent and the budget could have done much more on important issues that all New Yorkers face.

As the ranking member of the Senate Education Committee, Addabbo is pleased to see an increase of approximately \$1 billion for Education Aid, which amounts to a record total of \$26.7 billion for the 2018-2019 school year — a 36 percent increase since 2012. This budget also invests \$25 million to expand pre-Kindergarten and afterschool programs, as well as \$7.6 billion in State support for higher education.

“Education funding is vitally important in keeping our schools open and running well. This nearly \$1 billion in Education Aid in the FY 2019 budget is a boon to New York schools, along with \$25 million for pre-K and afterschool programs which will not only help children and students, but parents as well,” Addabbo said. “However, it isn't just the young students that enjoyed increases in education funding. The state has invested \$118 million to continue the

higher education Excelsior Scholarship program, and \$1.2 billion for strategic programs that aim to make college more affordable for all New Yorkers.”

In order to help New York City’s growing homeless crisis, the FY 2019 budget includes an historic \$250 million for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) to create quality living conditions for tenants and implements new oversight measures, as well as Design/Build legislation that will expedite future NYCHA building projects.

“It is great to see NYCHA get much-needed funding in this budget because the agency has been seriously failing some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers in recent years,” Addabbo said. “While the Mayor and Governor continue to conflict over NYCHA, real people with families are living in terrible conditions, sometimes without hot water or heat. This historic level of funding and oversight will go a long way in helping these families.”

This budget also address the city’s major transportation needs by fully funding the Subway Action Plan with state funds for half of the \$836 million plan — while New York City foots the remainder of the funds — to make immediate repairs to improve subway performance and maintenance. It also creates a \$2.75 surcharge south of 96th Street in Manhattan on for-hire vehicles including both yellow and green cabs and rideshare companies like Uber to help ease vehicular congestion in the city.

“Although it is paramount that we make efforts to reduce the congestion in the city, I’m concerned that a for-hire vehicle surcharge could push the cost onto customers which will have a negative impact on low- and middle-income New Yorkers,” Addabbo said. “One way to get more cars off the roads is to provide residents with reliable public transportation, and the City and State fully funding the Subway Action Plan will go a long way in doing just that.”

While Addabbo praises some aspects of the budget, the Senator believes that much more could have been done on a number of important issues.

Addabbo is particularly concerned over the lack of transparency in the budget process, and a lack of diversity in the decision making process as Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins — the only female leader in the Legislature — was excluded from the process.

“With the complete lack of transparency of this budget process, negotiations on important issues were limited,” Addabbo said. “The FY 2019 budget fails to find more ways to protect LGBTQ New Yorkers; deal with climate change, including meeting the Diesel Emissions Standards set forward by DERA; adequately help our local municipalities more and increase our AIM funding; or pass the Child Victims Act to address the need to provide justice to sexual abuse survivors, among other issues.”

The Senator stated, “I am hopeful that now that the budget is complete, we can legislatively address school safety, sensible gun safety measures, ethics reform and improve the voting process.”

“At times, it is disappointing to see such a divide between Senate Democrats and Republicans where we cannot even come together to negotiate the budget that will affect our entire state,” Addabbo said. “We need to put party labels and backroom deals aside and do what is best for the people of New York. I will continue to fight for important issues on behalf of the voters who demand them.”