



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael H. Ranzenhofer

Budget Priorities Address Upstate's Population Decline, Economic Challenges

SENATOR MICHAEL H. RANZENHOFER February 20, 2019

Look for...

Senator Mike Ranzenhofer's
Monthly Column

...In your local newspaper
the third week of every month

Senator Ranzenhofer's column appeared in the Amherst and Clarence Bees on February 20th. As I mentioned in last month's column, high taxes and a lack of jobs are forcing residents to vote with their feet. Nearly one million residents have left New York since 2010, and 42 out of the 50 counties in Upstate New York have witnessed a population decrease since the last census.

The mass exodus of New York residents will not end until these issues are resolved. That is why my budget priorities are focused on stopping the outmigration of residents by addressing Upstate's economic challenges and improving its economy.

Right now, our state faces a \$2.3 billion budget deficit. The budget should be balanced by cutting spending and eliminating waste in state government, not by asking New Yorkers to pay more in taxes.

Instead, the budget should lower the tax burden for Upstate New York's small businesses and manufacturers, in an effort to create more jobs for existing residents. It should also streamline and remove red tape, regulations and other obstacles to investments in our local economy. The final plan should invest in our local labor force by connecting workers with new and available employment opportunities.

Reforming state economic development efforts would also help to ensure that public investment is actually creating real, new jobs in Western New York. In order to do so, legislation should be included in this year's budget to protect taxpayer dollars when companies miss their investment and job creation targets.

Another major part of our Upstate economy is agri-business. I am disappointed that Governor Cuomo eliminated nearly \$13 million for local agricultural funding in his Executive Budget. These critical programs support area farmers with research and education. This year's budget should reinstate this important economic development funding.

I am also opposed to the Governor's \$59 million reduction in direct funding to local governments. If not fully restored, I am concerned that Western New York town and village governments will be forced to either raise property taxes or reduce services.

Making the property tax cap permanent is also among my budget priorities. The cap has saved property taxpayers more than \$20 billion. It is working to limit the annual growth in local property taxes. Extending this tax-saving measure would secure billions of dollars in additional tax savings in the future.

Most importantly, the final budget should allocate Western New York's fair share of state dollars for our local schools and infrastructure improvement projects. I am concerned that New York City Democrats may shortchange Upstate New York by controlling all three branches of state government.

Overall, my budget priorities focus on addressing Upstate's population decline and economic challenges. By enacting these initiatives, it will be more affordable for residents to live, work and retire in Western New York. As your State Senator, I'll keep you posted on my legislative efforts.