



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## An Update on Legislative Progress

PETE HARCKHAM March 21, 2019

| ISSUE: [SENATOR HARCKHAM. SD40](#)



### An Update on Legislative Progress at the (Almost) Three Month Mark

As we near the three-month mark of this legislative session and my first term as State Senator, I am proud to recap the accomplishments of the Senate Democratic Majority, as well as my own.

To date, the Senate has passed important legislation on protecting child victims of sexual assault, assisting New York State businesses, capping property tax bills and, enacting voting reform, new gun safety laws and reproductive health rights. We are currently negotiating

the state budget and the Senate has released its one-house Budget Resolution.

I voted in favor of the Senate Budget Resolution because it offers a balanced budget and remains within the 2% state spending cap, while increasing funding to our public schools, many of which are struggling. Our Budget Resolution would restore AIM funding, providing additional funding to the state's municipalities to help hold the line on local property taxes. It also would protect the workers and communities impacted by the Indian Point closure.

On some of the more controversial issues facing the Hudson Valley, our Budget Resolution would ensure that congestion pricing be used to upgrade MTA and MetroNorth services. It would also mandate that tax revenue from the proposed legalization of marijuana be directed towards educational outreach, addiction prevention services and public safety – some of the asks made at my recent Marijuana Legalization Public Forum in Mahopac.

As the Chair of the Senate Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Committee, I am very proud that the Senate one-house would expand funding and treatment options to help mitigate the statewide opioid addiction crisis. In particular, it would push the statute of concurrent review by insurance companies from 14 days to 28 days, and limit multi-day copays for outpatient treatment or aftercare to one, and at no more cost than a primary office visit. I will not rest until every New Yorker has access to high quality, life saving treatment.

The legislative measures we have passed so far, as well as the Senate Budget Resolution, would improve the quality of life for Hudson Valley residents. I will continue to advocate forcefully for my Senate District and I encourage all of my constituents to reach out to [harckham@nysenate.gov](mailto:harckham@nysenate.gov) with their thoughts on any Senate District 40 issue.

**Highlights of the Senate Budget Resolution:**

### **School Funding**

The Senate's one house budget resolution seeks to increase school aid by \$1.62 billion (6%) over the Governor's proposal, along with an increase in foundation aid of \$1.2b, (6.8%). This will help ensure schools won't need to drastically increase local school taxes to provide the quality education that our children deserve.

### **Indian Point**

The Electric Generation Facility Cessation Mitigation Program was created to provide grant assistance to support local governments, impacted by the closure of an electric generation facility. The Senate's proposal would increase the Executive's proposed funding from \$10 million to \$24 million, more than doubling the Executive Budget contribution.

### **Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Committee Funding**

Funding is provided for a groundbreaking new program, which helps support qualified staffing of addiction services by providing \$750,000 to develop and implement a loan forgiveness and scholarship program to recruit and retain staff into the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) prevention, treatment and recovery services field.

Increases the number of days of substance use disorder treatment from 14 days to 28 days before a concurrent review by insurance companies. This will help ensure that individuals attending inpatient treatment services stay long enough to rehabilitate without their insurer cutting off their care.

New language requires health insurance companies and inpatient facilities to coordinate post inpatient care treatment. This will make successful transition into outpatient, or home support services more easily attainable.

Consolidates multiple co-pays for outpatient or aftercare to one co-pay at cost of primary care visit, so that people suffering with addiction problems can afford the services that they need to get well.

The Senate modifies the Executive's recommendation of \$90 million to provide an additional \$10 million for the expansion of heroin and opiate support and services to combat the opioid crisis statewide.

### **Municipal Funding**

Provides for essential funding increases for municipalities throughout the 40th Senate District, including the full restoration of State Aid to Municipalities (AIM) of \$60 million to help keep local property taxes within the tax cap. The Executive proposal had sought to fund AIM through the County's share of proceeds from the internet sales tax. The Senate's proposal would leave the County's funds unfettered and provide the funding stream from the State's General Fund.

Supports improvements to our local roads and highways by ensuring an additional \$150 million of the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) to \$588 million. Additionally, the Senate seeks to fully restore funding of extreme weather recovery to \$65 million. These funding streams will make roads safer and eliminate many of the potholes drivers are accustomed to running over following the winter months.

Provides \$10 million in funding for early voting and other voting reforms. These funds ensure that local governments are not required to spend additional money to implement voting reforms to provide residents with the opportunity for early voting.

An extra \$2 billion for clean water infrastructure to protect our drinking water supplies and facilitate economic development.

Fully restores \$3.735 million for the Joseph Dwyer Peer to Peer program to help veterans with PTSD, plus an additional \$1 million to expand the incredibly successful Dwyer Program.

### **Funding for Hudson Valley Items**

Restores \$2.5 million for state aid to Westchester County's policing program, which the Executive budget proposal sought to eliminate. Funding for this program helps provide for the safety and security of our roadways.

Provides for a record level of funding of \$1.5 million for New York Medical College's Center of Excellence program. The Center of Excellence, located in Valhalla, provides expertise in disaster medicine and medical countermeasures and works with partners in New York State to increase the capacity of first responders, hospitals, and health care systems to respond to disasters, acts of terrorism and public health emergencies.

Supports services to constituents through funding the Boys and Girls Club of Northern Westchester and the United Way's 211 program. Both are prime examples of a public/private partnership that provides linkage to vital services and saves taxpayer money.

### **Census Funding**

Provide \$40 million in funding for community outreach for Census 2020. This funding will ensure Hudson Valley residents, particularly in towns with many immigrants, will not be undercounted in the upcoming federal census.