



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

Senate Deputy Leader Gianaris, Senate Democratic Majority Enact Budget That Advances New York Values And Protects Taxpayers

MICHAEL GIANARIS April 2, 2019

| ISSUE: **BUDGET, CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM, BAIL REFORM, EDUCATION, MASS TRANSIT**



ALBANY, N.Y. – Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris and the Senate Majority passed the 2019-2020 State Budget. The budget includes historic action to reform the state's justice system, implement the Affordable Care Act into state law, advance a public financing system, and invest in environmental protection efforts. The budget also provides tax relief for overburdened New York families, increases support for New York students by investing over \$1 billion more in state education aid, and cuts taxes for middle class New Yorkers. All of

these accomplishments were achieved despite lower anticipated state revenues due to efforts by the Trump Administration to attack New York State finances. The enacted budget reflects a responsible financial plan that is within the available revenues provided by State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli and remains within the 2% state spending cap.

Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris said, “Our New York Senate is responsible for the most historic and dramatic reforms to our troubled criminal justice system, including realizing the bail reform many of us sought for years. This budget also makes substantial down payments on the promise of a more progressive future, though our efforts are only beginning, as we must keep working to ensure the enactment of a robust public financing program and full funding to provide a sound basic education for our children. I look forward to keeping up the fight on these and other issues.”

Improving Educational Opportunities

The Senate Majority understands that education is the great equalizer and that all New York students deserve access to a high quality education no matter their zip code. The enacted budget provides the largest amount of school aid in state history by providing an over \$1 billion increase to public education investment across New York State. The enacted State Budget includes:

- Increasing School Aid by over \$1 billion, or 3.8%, over the 2018-2019 school year.
- Increasing Foundation Aid by \$618 million, or 3.5%, over the 2018-2019 school year. This investment brings the total state education funding to \$27.9 billion, and allocates over 70% of funds to high need school districts.
- Providing \$342 million to fully fund expense –based aid and allows flexibility for Community Schools Foundation Aid Set-Aside funding.

- Providing \$849 million for expanded pre-kindergarten grants, \$15 million increase to provide programs for three- and four-year olds.
- Extends mayoral accountability of New York City schools for three years, and includes reforms to enhance transparency and parental/community input in New York City school governance.
- Authorizes “piggyback contracts” for transportation in education by cutting the red tape that prevented school districts from working together to save money.
- Providing \$34.4 million for school lunch programs and a \$9 million increase to expand early college high schools.

Restoring Trust In State Government And Reforming The Electoral System

On the first full day of the 2019 Legislative Session, the Senate Majority passed historic pro-voter bills and electoral system reforms. The Senate Majority worked to continue those efforts through the State Budget process and achieved reforms to help restore the voters’ trust in state government. The enacted State Budget includes:

- Allocating \$10 million in funding for early voting and \$14.5 million in funding for e-poll books.
- A public financing commission with binding power to implement public campaign financing for legislative and statewide offices. Findings are due December 1, 2019 and will be binding unless modified by law within 20 days.
- Expanding upstate voting hours to begin at 6:00 AM and end at 9:00 PM, to ensure all New Yorkers have uniform voting hours.

- Protecting grassroots and volunteer-run organizations from being forced to register as lobbyists.
- Requiring three hours of paid time off so New Yorkers will be better able to vote on Election Day.

Supporting New York Businesses

The Senate Majority supports investment to assist New York businesses to grow, create jobs and be successful throughout the state. It is especially committed to encouraging the continued growth of Minority and Women Owned businesses. The enacted State Budget includes:

- Allocating \$365,000 for the Minority and Women Owned Business Development and Lending Program.
- Investing \$4 million for the Workforce Development Institute.
- Major investments to steer state and local resources to community banks and credit unions, which will help provide additional lending access to underserved communities.

Reforming New York's Justice System

The Senate Majority is committed to a fairer state justice system and the enacted budget includes long-called for reforms to make New York State fairer and more just. The enacted budget includes:

- Reforming Bail and Pretrial Detention: The enacted budget will eliminate cash bail for misdemeanors and non-violent felonies and ensure that no New Yorker is incarcerated because of their inability to pay. Additionally, law enforcement officials will be required to issue a desk appearance ticket to most people charged with misdemeanors and Class E felonies.
- Ensuring the Right to a Speedy Trial: The enacted budget will ensure that defendants do not sit in jail waiting for a trial while dates keep getting postponed by requiring that misdemeanors are resolved within 90 days and felonies within 180 days. The enacted budget includes legislation that requires courts to take a proactive role in advising litigants on how time will be charged and inquire into the government's readiness to proceed to trial and require the government to file all suitable paperwork before statement of readiness is accepted.
- Transforming the Discovery Process: The enacted budget includes reforms that will overall New York's discovery process to require that both prosecutors and defendants share all information in their possession well in advance of trial. This legislation will also ensure that both victims and witnesses are protected from intimidation and other forms of coercion by providing prosecutors the ability to petition a court for a protective order.

Investing In Mass Transit And Supporting Transportation Mobility

The Senate Majority is committed to smart investments in New York State's mass transit infrastructure. This includes addressing the MTA and specific regional needs across the state. The enacted State Budget includes:

- A traffic mobility plan that treats drivers fairly, reduces peak-hour congestion, incentivizes efficient commercial vehicle and business travel, and dedicates revenues

equitably.

- Providing dedicated revenue streams for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to receive \$25 billion in capital assistance.

Improving Health Care For New Yorkers

Quality health care is a basic right that all New Yorkers deserve access to. The Senate Majority understands this fact and offered multiple proposals to ensure the State Budget provides essential funds for New Yorker's health care needs and essential medical care providers. The enacted State Budget includes:

- Implementing the federal Affordable Care Act and the New York Health Care Exchange into State law
- Investing \$100 million in OASAS to better confront the opioid abuse crisis.
- Requiring health insurance companies to increase the length of time available for New Yorkers seeking in-patient treatment for substance abuse disorders.
- Providing over \$3.8 million for School Based Health Clinics.
- Investing significant state funds for research and programs to combat diseases including Sickle Cell, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and Lupus.

Protecting New York's Environment And Natural Resources

The Senate Majority supports efforts to protect New York State's environment and natural resources. With a federal government run by climate change deniers, the Senate Majority will work to have New York State serve as a national and international leader in the fight

against climate change. The enacted State Budget includes:

- Banning single-use plastic bags and empowering counties and cities to opt into a 5-cent fee on paper bags, with 40 percent of the generated revenue going to local efforts to provide reusable bags for low and fixed-income consumers, and 60 percent of the generated revenue going to the State's Environmental Protection Fund.
- Providing a historic level of funding for the Environmental Protection Fund of \$300 million.

Empowering New Yorkers To Stay In Their Homes

The Senate Majority is committed to access to affordable housing for New Yorkers and protecting them from housing discrimination. The enacted State Budget includes:

- Implementing the Lawful Source of Income Non-Discrimination Act of 2019 to fight housing discrimination. New Yorkers who receive some form of lawful non-wage income or subsidies will now be protected against discrimination in housing including: domestic violence survivors, veterans, elderly, and disabled individuals.
- Increasing funding for the Tenant Protection Unit to \$5.5 million, a 22% increase over the current year.
- Investing \$20 million in foreclosure prevention services to help New Yorkers stay in their homes.