



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

## Westchester Senators Vote to Pass Historic State Budget

SHELLEY B. MAYER April 1, 2019

| ISSUE: WESTCHESTER, PROPERTY TAX RELIEF, PUBLIC SCHOOLS



*Budget includes permanent property tax cap and an over \$50 million dollar increase in aid to Westchester schools*

*Restoration of \$60 million in AIM funding delivers nearly \$4 million for Westchester towns & villages*

On Sunday, March 31, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and the Westchester State Senate Delegation voted in favor of the 2019-20 NYS Budget, highlighting significant increases in Foundation Aid funding for high-need school districts throughout the state;

restoration of AIM funding to support local villages and towns; and funding of critical nonprofits contributing to local communities. Advancements in the 2019-20 NYS Budget were secured despite an unexpected shortfall in revenue in the fourth quarter which moderated legislative efforts to increase funding for major state budget priorities.

**Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** said, "This year's state budget delivers crucial resources to Westchester County and reflects our values as a community. Property owners in Westchester will now have the security of a permanent property tax cap and families will benefit from additional middle class tax cuts. Westchester school aid has increased over \$50 million for a total of over \$850 million. Communities throughout Westchester will also benefit from the hard-fought for restoration of aid to local towns, villages and cities, millions of dollars in dedicated revenue for Metro-North improvements, and restored state aid for county law enforcement. Additionally, this budget includes funding to implement Early Voting, reforms to our state's justice system, access to health care, protections for our environment including a ban on plastic bags, and support for women across New York. I want to commend and thank my colleagues from Westchester, Senators Bailey, Biaggi, Carlucci, Harckham and Mayer for their partnership and advocacy throughout the budget process to deliver results."

**State Senator Shelley B. Mayer, Chair of the Education Committee**, said, "I thank Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and my Senate colleagues for prioritizing education funding in this year's budget despite the unexpected fiscal strain on the state's finances. We secured a \$618 million increase in Foundation Aid funding, nearly double the Executive Budget Proposal and targeted the highest need school districts. The passage of a permanent property tax cap, full AIM funding, and restoration of healthcare cuts are major victories for the state. Our changes to bail, speedy trial, and discovery are historic improvements to our criminal justice system. We also won major victories for the environment by enacting a statewide plastic bag

ban, committing to revitalizing our transportation systems, and increasing voter access. I congratulate my Westchester colleagues for sweeping changes that will improve the lives of all New Yorkers.”

**State Senator Pete Harckham, Chair of the Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Committee**, said, “I’m proud to have fought for a budget that reflects Hudson Valley values. We won a \$1 billion increase in school aid in the final budget. The largest percentage increase in the state, \$3 million, went to the Ossining School District and a \$2.5 million increase went to Peekskill. We fully restored \$60 million in AIM funding to our municipalities and passed a permanent 2 percent property tax cap to help overburdened taxpayers. We’re protecting our veterans, investing \$500 million in clean water infrastructure, banning single use plastic bags and maintaining the high quality of our healthcare system. While no budget is ever perfect, we closed a \$2B shortfall and were able to invest in key priority areas and stay within the 2% spending growth cap.”

**State Senator Jamaal Bailey, Chair of the Committee on Codes**, said, “Last night during the budget negotiations, the constituents of the 36th were my priority. I proudly represent the Westchester City of Mount Vernon, and parts of the Bronx. I along with the Westchester delegation in the Senate were able to deliver to our constituents significant funds that range from education aid, renewable energy, and improved transportation. We were also able to achieve landmark reforms in the areas of speedy trial, bail, and discovery. I want to thank our Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins and Senator Liz Krueger for ensuring this funding in the budget.”

**State Senator Alessandra Biaggi, Chair of the Ethics Committee**, said, “There are some very important wins for the people of Westchester in the budget, and still much to do. I’m particularly proud of the criminal justice reforms, which will ensure that impoverished

communities will no longer be disenfranchised. Equal justice under the law is a fundamental principle of our democracy. We have finally implemented a permanent 2% property tax cap to provide real tax relief and support for local communities. We are leading the way to a greener future and protecting New York's environment and natural resources by banning plastic bags. We have provided vital funding for the implementation of the voting reforms we previously passed, which make it easier for everyone to register and vote. This is essential to maintaining our democracy, especially when the right to vote is under attack in certain parts of the country. Nothing is more important than ensuring that every child in every zip code has the opportunity to receive a high quality education. We have secured solid education funding in this budget and will continue to fight to increase funding in the future. At a time when the Affordable Care Act is under attack at the federal level, we protected access to health insurance and to essential health benefits by codifying the ACA into state law. It is imperative that we provide adequate funding for both the subways and commuter rail, which are and should be seen as a single system. Congestion pricing is a major step in that direction and it includes dedicated funds for Metro North. I would like to thank Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and my colleagues for the hard work it took to achieve these and other advances. And I join them in committing to keep working for all the people of Westchester and New York State."

**State Senator David Carlucci** said, "Our budget included a \$1 billion increase in education funding with better equity, including an increase of over \$3 million dollars for the Ossining School District. Working with parents and teachers, we fought for a more equitable solution, and now we will work to give our children the education they need and deserve. We thank Leader Stewart-Cousins and Senator Mayer for recognizing the importance of funding our schools."

**PUBLIC EDUCATION IS THE BACKBONE OF DEMOCRACY**

- \$618 million increase in Foundation Aid statewide, nearly double the Executive Budget Proposal:
  - 70 percent of the increased funding is going to high-need school districts.
- Total statewide education funding reaches a record \$27.9 billion.
- \$15 million increase in statewide Pre-K funding, for a total of \$849 million.
- \$45 million for the Empire State After-School Program.
- \$97 million for libraries statewide.

## **PROTECTING TAXPAYERS WHILE SUPPORTING MUNICIPALITIES & COMMUNITIES**

- The adopted budget includes a permanent 2 percent property tax cap expected to save property taxpayers nearly \$190 billion dollars over the next decade, with anticipated adjustments to address BOCES' capital.
- The Legislature's successful restoration of the \$60 million in Aid & Incentives to Municipalities (AIM) funding in the adopted budget restored almost \$4 million (\$3,832,255) in AIM funding for Westchester County towns and villages.
- \$438 million statewide for the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) in capital funding to repave local roads and highways.
- \$2.2 million to support the Westchester County Police.

## **STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY & VOTER PARTICIPATION, AND PROTECTING GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING**

- The adopted budget includes \$10 million in local assistance for early voting and \$14.5 million in funding for e-poll books.
- This year's budget also authorizes up to \$20 million for outreach and education efforts to ensure all New Yorkers are counted as part of the 2020 census.
- The adopted budget protects grassroots organizations and local activists by rejecting the Executive's proposal of unduly & burdensome filing requirements. The parents and PTAs that organized and sent legislators postcards should not be burdened with lobbying filing requirements.
- The budget includes establishing 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.
- New Yorkers will now have three hours of paid time off to be able to vote on Election Day.

## **SUPPORTING NEW YORK BUSINESSES**

The enacted state budget supports New York business growth and job creation throughout the state. This budget demonstrates a commitment 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.

## **SUPPORTING HIGHER EDUCATION**

The adopted budget provides extensive and critical funding for SUNY and CUNY, including:

- SUNY and CUNY students whose families make up to \$125,000 annually will now be eligible to apply for tuition-free college as the Excelsior Scholarship Program enters its third year.
- \$27 million for students covered by the Jose R. Peralta DREAM Act.

## **INVESTING IN SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT, HEALTHCARE, HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS & WORKERS**

The enacted NYS Budget provides essential funding for New Yorker's health care needs and essential medical care providers. The enacted State Budget:

- Implements the federal Affordable Care Act and the New York Health Care Exchange into State law.
- The enacted budget restores \$550 million in Medicaid Cuts including:
  - \$222 million in claw back from rate increases for Hospitals and Nursing Homes;
  - \$138 million in indigent care pool payments to certain hospitals; and
  - \$190 million across the board rate cuts.

- Provides \$16 million enhanced safety net hospitals investment, including St. John's Riverside in Yonkers and Montefiore Mount Vernon Hospital.
- Provides \$15 million for Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly (EISEP) to reduce waiting lists.
- At Senator Harckham's urging, the budget doubled the number of days of inpatient substance use disorder treatment, from 14 to 28, before a concurrent review by insurance companies. This groundbreaking change will ensure that people struggling with addiction have insurance coverage for inpatient treatment for at least 28 days.
- Adopting a salary raise of 2% under the "Be Fair to Direct Care" campaign to increase wages for those who provide care to the most vulnerable.
- Improvements to the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP) with no interruption in service.
- Over \$3.8 million for School Based Health Clinics.
- Additional state funds for research and programs to combat diseases including Sickle Cell, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and Lupus
- Mandates insurance coverage for in-vitro fertilization and egg-freezing.

## **ADVANCING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS**

With eroding federal commitment to address climate change and protect our natural resources. The enacted State Budget includes:

- Ban on single use plastic bags, and creates a local opt-in for a five-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.

- \$500 million of additional dedicated funding for clean water infrastructure, for a total of \$3 billion, to provide major improvements in public health by funding improvement projects.
- \$300 million for the Environmental Protection Fund, including a proposal requiring certain food scrap generators to separate, store, and transport food scraps to an organics recycler.

## **INVESTING IN PUBLIC TRANSIT**

- Implementation of Central Business District Tolling to achieve sustainable funding solution to meet the capital needs of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA). Under this program, electronic tolling devices will be installed in Manhattan (south of 60th Street). The program establishes a six-member review board to advise and make recommendations on tolls, exemptions, and credits.
  - At Senate urging, ten percent of the revenues from the program to be dedicated to capital project costs of Metro-North.
- An additional \$4.2 million for the Bee-Line Bus System, for a total of \$61.5 million.

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM**

- Eliminates cash bail and pre-trial detention for misdemeanors and non-violent felonies to ensure that no New Yorker is incarcerated because of their inability to pay.

- Ensures defendants do not languish in jail waiting years for a trial by requiring that misdemeanors are resolved within 90 days and felonies within 180 days.
- Reforms discovery to require that both prosecutors and defendants share all information in their possession well in advance of trial.

## **SUPPORTING NON-PROFITS IN THE COMMUNITY**

- \$1.6 million for Displaced Homemaker Program
- \$1.25 million for the United Way's 2-1-1 Program
- \$842,000 for Legal Services of the Hudson Valley
- \$400,000 for Housing and Kinship Caregiver Legal Services
- \$200,000 for the Veterans and Military Families Advocacy Project Funds
- \$152,000 for the Legal Services Assistance Fund
- \$90,000 for the Domestic Violence Legal Service Project
- \$750,000 for the New York State Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs
- \$400,000 for New York State YMCA Foundation
- \$250,000 for ALS Greater NY Association
- \$250,000 for the Association of New York State Youth Bureaus
- \$225,000 for Westchester County Youth Bureau
- \$100,000 for Youth Theatre Interactions
- \$90,000 for Make the Road New York
- \$80,000 for Federation of Italian American Organizations
- \$46,000 My Sister's Place