



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George M. Borrello

Statement from Senator George Borrello on the State Budget

GEORGE M. BORRELLO April 2, 2020

| ISSUE: **NYS BUDGET, COVID-19, MEDICAID, SCHOOL AID, ENERGY PROJECT SITING**



“Our state is at an extraordinarily difficult moment in its history as the COVID-19 pandemic exacts a heavy toll on our citizens, health care sector, economy and virtually every aspect of life.

“Against this scenario, the need for a transparent, ‘clean’ budget -- focused solely on essential fiscal matters and without politically-driven policies -- was never more obvious or critical. Disappointingly, we didn’t get that as political expediency trumped transparency.

“There is no greater example of the danger of folding controversial policy in between the pages of a thousand-plus page fiscal document than last year’s disastrous bail ‘reform’ which thoroughly abandoned public safety in a rush to appease radical activists.

“This issue made a command appearance in this year’s budget, but this time, to ‘fix’ the mistakes of the original bill. Crafted behind closed doors once again without stakeholders around the table, the ‘fix’ lacks the number one provision that law enforcement experts agreed was most critical: restoration of judicial discretion. This is an attempt to fix a fatal wound with a band aid and it won’t work.

“Local governments, who are already hurting financially from the loss of local tax revenue due to the COVID-19 crisis, are looking at unprecedented pain and hard choices under this budget. Rather than accept a critically needed \$6 billion in emergency federal funding for Medicaid, the Governor chose to decline the funds so he could go ahead with his plan to shift even more of the financial burden to county and city governments, who may have no choice but to look to local property taxpayers to help them meet these increased costs.

“As we focus right now on the public health emergency before us, we also have to recognize the economic emergency that is unfolding alongside it. Many of our small businesses will be casualties of this pandemic. Those that have a chance of surviving will need our assistance. However, those small business owners won’t find that assistance in this budget. Just the opposite; they will find higher costs and more regulations to support a politically-driven agenda. From an expansion of prevailing wage, to a ban on polystyrene that will threaten 2,000 mostly upstate jobs, to the rejection of a small business tax credit, this budget reminds us of how New York has gained its status as one of the worst places in the nation to start, grow and sustain a business.”

“Yet, as Albany’s ruling class heaps more taxes and regulations on our small businesses, farmers, localities and every hardworking New Yorker just trying to make ends meet, this budget opens the door for growth in the heavily subsidized ‘green energy’ sector by implementing measures to expedite and facilitate the siting of large-scale renewable energy projects by eliminating home rule.

“A provision in the budget would strip away any local control of the siting process, thereby silencing those whose homes and communities will be most impacted. This heavy-handed move is outrageous and it’s wrong on so many levels. It will lead to the widespread industrialization of our beautiful landscape along with the negative economic, environmental and human health impacts that follow these costly boondoggle renewable projects.

“For these and so many other reasons, I could not vote in favor of this budget. Not only is the process clearly in need of reform, what was produced in this budget were simply new iterations of the same failed, agenda-driven policies that created the flight of residents and businesses to other states, while suppressing economic growth and opportunity.

“These are challenging days for our state and our nation, but I find hope and inspiration in the extraordinary New Yorkers who are working around the clock to help and protect us from this insidious COVID-19 pandemic. Every front line worker in this war—from our health care professionals, to our police, firefighters and EMTs, to restaurant workers, grocers, farmers and truckers, child care providers and any and every essential worker—deserves our thanks and praise. They are the everyday heroes who will carry us through this crisis. I, along with my colleagues at all levels of government, will continue to fight for them, and the security, opportunity and prosperity we all need and deserve.”

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