



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

4.2.20 - Statement from Senator Fred Akshar on the 2020-21 NYS Budget

FRED AKSHAR April 2, 2020

| ISSUE: **CORONAVIRUS, \$6 BILLION BUDGET GAP, 2020-21 BUDGET**

Akshar Statement on NYS Budget

Statement from Senator Fred Akshar

Right now, New Yorkers across our state are fighting for their lives. As of today 92,381 of our fellow New Yorkers have been diagnosed with coronavirus, including one of our own Senators, and as of today 2,373 people have died. That grim toll rises everyday.

God bless our doctors, our nurses, all of our health care workers, our police and firefighters, our EMS, our grocers, our farmers, our truckers, our delivery drivers and every essential worker - they're all fighting this war every day for us and putting their own lives at risk to save others.

It breaks my heart to know that in this State Budget, our leaders in Albany aren't fighting for them.

If anything, this budget is acting directly against those we should be helping.

This budget does nothing to deal directly with the coronavirus, spreading invisibly and insidiously throughout this state.

Everyday we see the rising death toll. We see the refrigerated trucks parked outside New York City hospitals and makeshift morgues to handle the growing number of people this virus has killed.

We all hear the desperate pleas of our hospital workers and we can't deny the facts - New York leads the nation and parts of the world in number of cases and death.

In the face of this crisis, the One Party Leadership in Albany looked at the federal government's \$6 billion in funding assistance and flat out rejected it. They rejected funding to help save lives.

Instead, the budget adds \$11 Billion in new borrowing and cuts \$2.5 Billion from the Medicaid system, using the Medicaid Redesign Team to balance the budget on the backs of our local communities and municipalities.

They're now forcing our local governments to foot the bill rather than the state. Where does that money come from? Our local property tax payers, which means only one thing. Our taxes will once again rise and make New York less affordable.

In the midst of a public health crisis, it's simply unconscionable.

In times of uncertainty and crisis, our leaders at every level of government must rise to the challenge, put their petty politics and political gamesmanship aside to deal with the emergency at hand.

They must work to benefit all New Yorkers, not just those who curry political favor.

Yet our leadership in Albany rejected any tax cuts for small businesses. The same small businesses who are being forced to shutter across our state.

They place more regulations on them through new prevailing wage requirements, through banning gelled liquid propane gas drilling and through banning styrofoam, essentially eliminating 2,000 upstate jobs with the flick of a pen.

All while keeping in place a half a billion dollar Film Tax Credit for Hollywood producers. All while spending \$40 million on the Governor's failed START-UP NY program, which to date has spent over \$100 million for fewer than 2,000 new jobs. All while setting aside \$100 million in tax dollars for taxpayer-funded political campaigns.

This is not leadership, it's taking advantage of a crisis to pad their own interests.

One Party Rule also created a new gap elimination adjustment in school aid, keeping funding flat for our students stuck learning from home.

Of all the political issues stuffed into this year's budget, our leaders failed to repeal the disastrous bail reform that our law enforcement, crime victims advocates and families all harshly opposed.

In fact, they created a new class E felony for allowing the federal government access to any information gained from giving drivers licenses to illegal immigrants.

All without public debate or discussion.

This is an unprecedented budget in and unprecedented time, and I'm appalled at the so-called leadership in the Senate, Assembly and the Executive Chamber, the so-called leadership that tells our state's health care workers fighting to save lives that we're cutting funding to their hospitals.

This shouldn't be about Republican or Democrat, but the hard fact is that One Party controls every house in State Government.

My Republican colleagues in the Senate and the Assembly joined with good government groups to call on the Democrats in power not to play politics with this budget. This public health crisis is too important, and too many lives are at stake, but they did the opposite.

Now is the time to deal with the issues at hand, but this budget shows that not even the worst public health crisis in the history of our state could put One Party Rule in touch with the realities that New Yorkers face.

This budget makes a bad situation for New Yorkers even worse.

That's why I voted No.