



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

SERINO: STATE BUDGET SPENDS BIG, BUT FALLS SHORT

SUSAN SERINO April 7, 2021

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ALBANY, NY – Senator Sue Serino today released the statement below regarding the passage of the New York State Budget:

“Despite historic spending and billions of dollars in tax increases, this State Budget fails to deliver for New Yorkers. Worse, it was negotiated behind closed doors in a process clearly still controlled by a scandal-scarred Governor. With its passage coming in the wake of a once-in-a-generation pandemic, this is perhaps the most consequential State Budget we will ever vote on, and New Yorkers deserved better this time around. They deserved true transparency and a budget that actually made it more affordable for them to rebuild their lives. Instead, they are being saddled with unsustainable spending increases and cuts to programs they depend on.”

While the State Budget includes some good measures that I actively advocated for, including a full restoration of Dwyer Program (Vet2Vet) funding, notable school funding, preservation of the previously scheduled middle class tax cut, and the creation of a small business grant program, it still fell short when it came to fully funding Community Services for the Elderly (CSE), enhancing the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program to empower nursing home residents and families, supporting the homecare workforce, maintaining critical mental health services, making Lyme and tick-borne disease prevention a real priority, and so much more.

Throughout the debate, we heard time and again that the state does not have the money to fully fund programs that matter to New Yorkers. However, somehow, we have \$2.1 billion to provide thousands of dollars in direct payments to people living in the state illegally. While I am sympathetic to the challenges these individuals have faced during this time, a solution to those challenges must be developed at the federal level.

A budget that accepts over \$12 billion from the federal government, yet still raises billions in new taxes; a budget that gives away \$2.1 billion to those here illegally, yet closes 200 inpatient mental health beds and only dedicates a quarter of that to middle class taxpayers, and less than half of that amount to support struggling small businesses, is a bloated budget with backwards priorities.

If we want New York to be a place where people want to live, instead of one they want to leave, this budget misses the mark. With this process, we had a real opportunity to move our state forward at a critical time. Unfortunately, this budget will only set us back, which is why I could not in good conscience support it.”