



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeremy Cooney

## Sen. Cooney Votes to Pass NYS Budget that Benefits Rochesterians

JEREMY COONEY April 7, 2021

| ISSUE: **BUDGET, PUBLIC TRANSIT, BROADBAND, LIBRARIES**

(Albany, NY) - Today, Senator Cooney (D-Rochester) voted to pass the New York State budget, securing needed resources for Rochester. The newly passed budget provides funding for schools, transportation, as well as resources for Rochester families and small businesses as they seek to recover from the pandemic.

### **School Districts - Sen. Cooney delivers for Rochester public schools**

As the first Rochester City School District (RCSD) graduate to serve in the Senate in decades, investments in public education have been the priority for Senator Cooney. In this budget, there is a historic overall increase of 11% in total education funding. School districts across the state, including RCSD, will benefit from the largest ever increase in Foundation Aid, with a commitment to fully fund public school districts by the 2023-2024 school year. This has been discussed for years, but finally now has a three-year commitment to meeting this goal. This will be transformational for both urban and suburban districts. For example, currently the Brighton Central School District only receives 49% of what they are owed under the Foundation Aid formula.

For RCSD, specifically, the full cost of the State Monitor (Dr. Shelley Jallow) was also included. Additionally, there is an investment in expanding state-funded universal full-day

pre-kindergarten to new districts across the state, including some Monroe County suburban towns. The originally proposed \$2 billion in education cuts in the Governor's executive budget were not included.

### **Higher Education - Sen. Cooney leads on the Higher Education Committee**

Senator Cooney's mother was a longtime Professor at Monroe Community College (MCC), so he knows the value of an affordable college degree. Students attending both public and private colleges and universities will have access to increased tuition aid through the restoration of the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and Bundy Aid. TAP received its largest increase in 20 years while Bundy will be funded at \$35.1 million. The Governor's proposed cuts to these programs were not included in the final budget.

### **Broadband - Sen. Cooney leads as Chair of the Upstate Cities Committee**

The pandemic showed us that too many upstate communities, both urban and rural, do not have access to reliable high-speed internet service. The budget includes a proposal requiring the Public Service Commission to study the availability, reliability, and cost of high-speed internet services and to publish a detailed internet access map of the State. Additionally, the budget modifies the Governor's proposal that mandates broadband service providers offer a \$15 a month internet plan for low-income customers by expanding the eligibility criteria to access broadband internet.

### **Public Transportation - Sen. Cooney leads on the Senate Transportation Committee**

As the former chief of staff for the City of Rochester, Sen. Cooney knows the need to improve roads (including potholes), strengthen local bridges, and invest in mass transit. The Regional Transit Service (RTS) will have access to funding for capital improvements to

modernize its bus system, which will increase access to public transportation and continue to make sustainability gains for the region. The Governor's proposed budget cuts to the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS), Winter Extreme Recovery, and Statewide Mass Transportation Operating Assistance (STOA) were restored. Additionally, a new dedicated fund was established for urban roadway projects, which will benefit the City of Rochester's plans to improve commercial corridors.

### **Libraries**

Our libraries have always been safe spaces and vital parts of our neighborhoods. During the pandemic we saw how much we needed these institutions in our community. Libraries will receive a total of 94.1 million in aid as well as an additional \$20 million for library construction for a total of \$34 million. The Governor's proposed cuts to libraries were not part of the final budget.

### **Small Business Relief - Sen. Cooney leads on the Procurement Committee**

In response to the devastating pandemic, small businesses and restaurants will have access to funding through two grant programs. The Small Business Recovery Grant Program and the Restaurant Resiliency Grant Program were funded at \$800 million and \$25 million, respectively.

The Minority and Women-Owned Business Development and Lending Program will have a total of \$2 million to support Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE), which has been a priority for Sen. Cooney.

### **Assistance to Families / Child Care**

Low income families have been disproportionately impacted by pandemic. Job loss and remote learning have taken their toll on our families who were dependent on work that was limited after the outbreak of COVID-19. This budget includes new funding that will increase

access to resources for families in Monroe County. As an example, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Funding will bring a total pool of \$5.9 million dollars to Monroe County and New York City which will increase access to child care for low-income families. Further, the budget establishes the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program to provide \$2.43 billion in rent and utility relief for eligible tenants.

### **Criminal Justice Reform and Gun Violence**

The recent escalation in gun violence in the Greater Rochester Region must end. We are taking action throughout our community, but our state budget reflects this need as well. Through the Community Violence and Intervention Act we are calling gun violence what it is - a public health crisis. This Act creates funding for community and hospital based violence intervention programs which includes counseling to those who have experienced trauma from being victims of or witnessing gun violence.

### **Senator Jeremy Cooney**

“I am proud to vote for the passage of a budget that will extend much needed relief and support to the people and businesses of Rochester,” said Senator Jeremy Cooney (D-Rochester). “This budget is an investment in our community. It prioritizes schools, invests in upstate transportation, helps small businesses recover, and increases access to resources for vulnerable populations.”

“This extended budget negotiation process has shown that we will be champions for the people of Rochester and that we will do the work to deliver for those who have waited too long for help.”

### **Monroe County Executive Adam Bello**

“The 2021-22 New York State budget fulfills many priorities that my administration has advocated for, which will help advance our community, assist our residents and aid our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic,” Adam Bello, Monroe County Executive. “I want to

thank Senator Cooney and the Monroe County State Legislature delegation for their efforts on behalf of the residents of Monroe County, and look forward to continuing to work with them to ensure state resources are delivered to our community. From funding of important social service and public health programs like 340B and Community Based Preventative Services, to increases in transportation aid and emergency rental assistance, Monroe County will benefit from this year's spending plan."

**Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren**

"I'm grateful to Senator Cooney and our entire State delegation for their leadership in restoring vital Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) and transportation funding for Rochester," **said Mayor Lovely Warren.** "These revenues will help us as we recover together from the pandemic to create more jobs, safer more vibrant neighborhoods, and greater educational opportunities. It is clear to me that by working together we can truly accomplish our shared vision for a stronger Rochester."

**RCSD Superintendent Dr. Lesli Myers-Small**

"I want to thank the Rochester delegation for being champions for Rochester's children. This budget begins to recognize the financial formula necessary to address the unique needs of our students," **said Dr. Lesli Myers-Small, RCSD Superintendent.** "This is welcome news for students, families, and the community as we continue our partnership for equitable funding for our scholars."

**RTS CEO Bill Carpenter**

"On behalf of the RTS team, I thank Senator Cooney for his work on the Transportation Committee and for fighting for funding for public transit," **said Bill Carpenter, RTS CEO.** "The funding in the state budget will allow us to launch Reimagine RTS on May 17 as planned."

**President and CEO of Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce and Former Lieutenant Governor  
Bob Duffy**

"Including support for some of our hardest hit industries was crucial in this budget, and the Governor and Legislature delivered," said Bob Duffy, President and CEO of Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce. "Greater Rochester Chamber is glad to see hundreds of millions of dollars set aside to support small businesses, restaurants, MWBE's, and the performing arts. We are continuing to advocate for decreased taxes and mandates on small businesses and other industries so as to encourage job creation and business expansion."

**Director of the Monroe County Library System Patricia Uttaro**

"We are grateful for the tremendous support Senator Cooney has provided to libraries, which will help sustain critical services for our community," **said Patricia Uttaro Director of the Monroe County Library System.** "By restoring the operating and construction aid, libraries across Monroe County will be able to continue to offer the spaces, programs, and resources they richly deserve."