Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick Reports on Big Budget Wins for Local Communities

ELIJAH REICHLIN-MELNICK   April 20, 2022

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NANUET, NY - Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick (D-Rockland/Westchester) touted the benefits that New York State's 2022-2023 budget will bring to residents of Rockland and Westchester.

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"This budget will make life a little bit easier for people in Rockland and Westchester," he said. "It provides record funding for public schools, pre-K, and childcare, makes a historic investment in combating climate change and protecting our environment, improves public safety, and cuts taxes for middle class and working families."

To communicate key budget items and share good news about many kitchen table issues like tax relief and childcare costs, the Senator recorded a video to help local residents understand how this budget will make a difference for them. The video is also available in Spanish.

"With inflation rising, taxpayers need a break, and this budget delivers several different types of tax relief to middle class and working families," Reichlin-Melnick said. The budget includes $2.2 billion to provide property tax relief to homeowners in the STAR and Enhanced STAR programs who earn under $250,000 a year, income tax cuts for families earning under $323,000 a year, and temporarily suspends state sales taxes on gas from June 1 through the end of the year, which will save drivers about $2-3 every time they fill their tank.

Reichlin-Melnick, a former school teacher, noted that the budget includes an increase of $46 million in school aid to the districts he represents on both sides of the river. One of the biggest wins in last year's state budget was establishing a plan to fully fund Foundation Aid for schools, and this year's budget continues that commitment with an average increase in Foundation Aid funding of 25% for local school districts.

Foundation Aid Increase for Schools in the 38th Senate District:

- Briarcliff Manor - 9.8%
- Clarkstown - 24.5%
- East Ramapo - 16.5%

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- Nanuet - 38.5%

- Nyack - 22.5%

- Ossining - 37.6%

- Pearl River - 35.6%

- South Orangetown - 11.2%

- Suffern - 34.8%

To address chronic concerns with deteriorating roads, the adopted budget establishes a $1 billion dollar Pave Our Potholes five-year initiative that will help improve conditions on local and state roadways. Additionally, the budget keeps in place the 30% increase for local road repairs that was implemented last year. For communities in Senate District 38, that means New York State will be directing nearly $7 million to bolster local governments' ability to improve road conditions without property tax increases:

- $4.7 Million Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS)

- $866 Thousand Extreme Weather Recovery Program

- $1.3 Million Pave NY

The budget also authorizes record funding for environmental priorities, including a $400 million for the Environmental Protection Fund and a $1 million increase to the Hudson River Estuary Program which provides in-depth studies to help local governments in our area make smart and sustainable land-use decisions. However, voters will have to vote to approve the biggest investment in the environment. "The greatest long-term threat the world faces is

from human-caused climate change," said Senator Reichlin-Melnick." I was proud to vote to authorize a $4.2 billion dollar bond act that will bring groundbreaking investments in the critical fight against climate change. So now it's up to you, the voters, to flip your ballot over in November to approve this bond!"

The budget also includes what Senator Reichlin-Melnick characterizes as, "important changes to the state's criminal justice laws that will help address the rising gun violence epidemic and protect public safety. Gun violence is an epidemic. We saw it again recently in Brooklyn. We must do all that we can to stem the tide of illegal firearms, and keep legal guns from getting into the hands of criminals."

Click here for link to the Senator's YouTube video Breaking Down the Budget