



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeremy A. Cooney

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JEREMY A. COONEY February 24, 2023

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SENATOR COONEY, RBTL CALL ON NEW YORK STATE TO SUPPORT HISTORIC THEATERS IN BUDGET

(ROCHESTER, NY) - Today, February 24, **Senator Jeremy Cooney (D-Rochester)** and The Rochester Broadway Theatre League called on New York State to include funding for historic theaters in the 2024 budget.

Historic arts facilities employ over a thousand of our constituents and have a direct economic impact of more than \$350 million dollars per year. Our upstate arts centers impact sales tax revenue, increase neighboring property tax values, and are key parts of the “sales pitches” of our economic development and tourism efforts.

These theaters have done this without ever having the critical core funding for operations that 100-year-old facilities all need. None of the historic upstate theaters serving our communities receive significant support from the New York State Council on the Arts.

Senator Cooney is advocating for \$20 million in new funding to be included in the budget to support utilities, insurance, or staffing at these historic sites and those who operate them.

The Senator is supporting “Alive Downtowns!”, a coalition of thirteen historic theaters across Upstate. Members include: Bardavon 1896 Opera House (Poughkeepsie), Clemens Center (Elmira), Palace Performing Arts Center (Albany), Proctors Collaborative (Schenectady, Albany, Saratoga), The Reg Lenna Center for the Arts (Jamestown), Rochester Broadway Theatre League’s Auditorium Theatre (Rochester), Shea's Performing Arts Center (Buffalo), The Smith Center for the Arts (Geneva), Stanley Theatre (Utica), State Theatre of Ithaca, Syracuse Area Landmark Theatre, Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, and Ulster Performing Arts Center (Kingston).

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It's time for New York to step up for historic theaters," Said Senator Jeremy Cooney. "Rochester and neighboring cities have made significant investments in downtown revitalizations, historic theaters are often at the heart of those projects. They survived the pandemic, they're centers of our community, and they've invested in our state. Now is the time to invest in them. I look forward to continuing this fight in Albany."

"These venues are crucial to the quality of life and the economic vitality of our downtowns," said **John Parkhurst**, *COO, RBTL*.

"We can do more, with more. RBTL is committed to providing opportunities for the greatest number of people by providing cultural learning opportunities for everyone," said **Linda Glosser**, *Executive Vice President, RBTL*. "We are grateful to Senator Cooney for his leadership in pursuing critical funding on behalf of our AliveDowntowns! coalition."

"We, the 13 performing arts centers of upstate New York, thank Senator Cooney and the upstate delegation for their support of our efforts to provide needed dollars to our facilities and what they mean for our downtowns," said **Philip Morris**, *CEO of Proctors in Schenectady and Founder of Alive Downtowns*.

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