



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Walczyk

Senator Walczyk Responds To Passage of Budget Bills Over A Month Late

MARK WALCZYK May 3, 2023

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Now a month late, the New York State Legislature concludes an embarrassing budget process with bills that include a little good, but a lot of bad and ugly. Albany Democrats recklessly pushed through their spending spree and used a message of necessity in order to block out the public, media, and legislators from fully reviewing the nine budget bills. Senator Walczyk would like to shed light on some of the language that will most directly affect the 49th Senate District.

An alarming piece of legislation that will directly impact the 49th Senate District are the out of touch policies regarding electrification. Found in S4006-C, Albany Democrats crammed through terrible policy that the Senator has been sounding the alarm on for months on end. Included under part RR in S4006-C is the ban of fossil fuels for single family homes. The bill advances language that would “prohibit installation of fossil-fuel equipment and building systems in new construction of seven stories or fewer or industrial buildings greater than 100,000 square feet starting in 2026 and in all new buildings starting in 2029.” This legislation has been pushed through with complete disregard for the residents and owners of single family homes in Upstate New York.

The S4006-C budget bill also includes a “cap and tax” initiative under part TT that will raise costs for ratepayers in this state. It also brings back into language the Build Public Renewables Act under part QQ. This bill gives NYPA, an authority which hasn’t had its own renewable power project in over 15 years, the ability to construct new renewable energy projects and operate them in the state.

Another example of bad policy in this budget can be found in the changes made to the assessments of solar and wind farms across the State. The State mandated valuation guide will change the PILOTs that are paid to municipalities that have these solar and wind farms. The 49th Senate District boasts hundreds of windmills, including over 277 in the municipalities of Denmark, Martinsburg, Lowville, and Harrisburg alone. This change of the mandated valuation will needlessly rip roughly 78% of assessed value away from these municipalities. This lost revenue puts these rural municipalities, who budgeted responsibility with the windmill revenue in mind, in a position where the State has pulled the rug right out from underneath them.

Additionally, the budget includes a double down on wasting taxpayer dollars. Over \$700 million will be tied up in film tax credits and over \$300 million will go to help fund Broadway and off-Broadway productions. That's over \$1 billion for Broadway and Hollywood regardless of the success of the production. There is also \$25 million taxpayer dollars allotted for funding certain statewide re-election campaigns. This is over \$1.025 billion dollars that could go to funding roads and bridges, expanding broadband, and supporting agriculture. Instead this taxpayer money will go directly to self serving interests of Albany Democrats.

The nightmares of this document is not just what's in this budget, but also what's not included. Unfortunately, Albany Democrats do not see the value of supporting civics and patriotism in the young men of this state. They purposefully and shamefully left out \$200,000 in funding for the American Legion's Boys State program. Senators Walczyk, Griffo, and Ashby penned a joint letter to the Governor asking for this meaningful funding to be included in the budget, which in the grand scheme of a \$229 billion spending spree, is a drop in the bucket. This budget also doesn't go nearly far enough to address the issues of bail reform. New York remains a state that doesn't address the level of danger a criminal poses as a reason to impose bail. This omission makes New Yorkers less safe and doesn't go far enough to empower judges to make correct judgements to assure public safety.

In any budget with this much policy, there are bound to be a few positives and wins included. Senator Walczyk is glad this budget includes a full funding of the foundation aid to provide the support public schools were guaranteed years ago. This budget also includes a \$3.5 million matching grant program for municipalities to promote tourism in their area. The 49th Senate District features vast areas of renowned tourism such as the Adirondacks, the St. Lawrence River, the Tug Hill Plateau, and so much more. This matching grant program will help give necessary aid to these areas and encourage more visitors to experience the incredible assets of the 49th Senate District.

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“This budget process was needlessly shielded from public view,” said Senator Walczyk. “I would have appreciated if Albany Democrats didn’t ignore the 3 days of constitutional aging required so we could have reviewed the details before the voting began. However, I stood firm on the Senate floor and let them know exactly how damaging this budget is for Senate District 49. There’s funding for a lot of great things, of course, but this \$229 billion Democratic wishlist fails to address some of our biggest concerns over public safety, energy, affordability, and the skyrocketing cost of living. I couldn’t support it.”