



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

## Hinchey Announces Hudson Valley Wins in Final State Budget

MICHELLE HINCHEY May 5, 2023



**ALBANY, NY** – Senator Michelle Hinchey today announced highlights of the final enacted state budget for Fiscal Year 2024, which includes investments she championed on behalf of Hudson Valley residents in the 41st Senate District.

“Decades of disinvestment and underinvestment take a long time to undo. While this has been a difficult budget process, I’m proud of the historic wins we secured for the 41st District,” **said Senator Michelle Hinchey.** “Our final budget takes major steps forward to make life more affordable for New Yorkers, maintaining the lowest personal income tax rates for

working families in over 70 years and fully funding our public schools. We invested in the next generation by expanding pre-K into more Upstate communities, extending the Child Tax Credit to children under four, and won a significant expansion of free school meals, giving over 30,000 students in our district free breakfast and lunch. We stood up for our first responders by creating the first-ever Volunteer Fire Services Capital Fund, brought a true Upstate Film & TV Tax Credit to our region to help support our small businesses, and we're fighting for a more sustainable future by scaling renewable energy projects while protecting farmland. While these are only a few of the highlights in a budget that lays a strong foundation to support our Hudson Valley communities, there is always a lot more work to do. I look forward to building on our successes to ensure a New York that works for all."

**Highlights of the FY'24 State Budget championed by Hinchey include:**

Due to Hinchey's leadership, the final budget includes several provisions she secured to put more money in New Yorkers' pockets and deliver much-needed tax relief for Hudson Valley residents:

**Lower Personal Income Tax**

Hinchey and her Senate Majority colleagues continued a phase-in of the lowest personal income tax rates for working and middle-class families making it the lowest it has been in over 70 years.

**MTA Payroll Mobility Tax Exemption for Dutchess County**

Hinchey secured a commitment from the State that Dutchess County is exempt from paying an increase in the MTA Payroll Mobility Tax.

**SUNY New Paltz Impact Aid — \$300,000**

As the new representative of SUNY New Paltz in the State Senate, Hinchey secured Impact Aid to provide financial relief to Village of New Paltz residents from the costs of meeting the safety needs of SUNY students. Hinchey fought to secure a \$100,000 increase in SUNY New Paltz Impact Aid over previous years for a total of \$300,000 — the first time since 2021 that this aid has been attained for the Village of New Paltz.

### **New Tax Support for Sojourner Truth State Park Host Communities**

When Sojourner Truth State Park was created, over 500 acres of land became tax-exempt, running the risk of passing economic penalties onto local taxpayers, which Hinchey successfully fought to avert. Due to Hinchey's leadership, the final budget will deliver tax payments to the City of Kingston and the Town of Ulster — on par with what other NYS Park Host Communities receive — to ensure that residents do not bear an economic burden from the establishment of this new upstate landmark.

### **Investment Tax Credit (ITC) Expansion for NY Farmers**

Hinchey was successful in extending the Investment Tax Credit for farmers for the next five years through 2027 and expanding it to ensure that small and beginning farmers can realize the full impact of this tax credit. The tax credit refunds farm businesses for the costs of purchasing new equipment and machinery so that farmers can invest in their businesses and better position themselves for the future.

### **Raising the Minimum Wage**

The final budget increases the state minimum wage by \$2 over the next three years, after which it would increase at a rate determined by the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), giving hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who earn minimum wage a pay increase to keep up with rising costs of living.

## **Free School Meals — \$134.6 Million**

Due to Senator Hinchey's leadership, the final budget provides \$134.6 million to significantly expand free school meals in communities across New York State, covering 30,992 students in the 41st Senate District, which is 88.7% percent of the total student population. Under the plan, which will start in the 2023-24 school year, schools that participate in the federal Community Eligibility Provision program (CEP) will be reimbursed by SED for the cost of all meals the schools provide that are not covered by the federal government.

The final budget includes historic investments championed by Hinchey to expand access to child care for working families in rural and Upstate New York, including the following measures:

- **Expanded the Child Tax Credit** to include children from ages zero to four, allowing approximately 584,000 more households to claim the credit, benefitting 993,500 adults and 993,700 children in those households. This means that a family can receive these benefits starting from when their child is born.
- **\$500 million towards a Workforce Retention Grant Program**, providing up to \$2,000 in grants to daycare employees who work a minimum of 15 hours per week and \$1,500 to employees of school-age or after-school childcare providers.
- **\$34 million to childcare providers for recruitment assistance.** Grants can be used for signing bonuses, advertising, job fair attendance, or other activities, including \$4,000 for group daycare, daycare centers, and school-aged childcare providers; \$1,600 for group family daycare providers; \$800 for family daycare providers.
- **\$25 million to support the Employer Child Care Tax Credit.**

Hinchey fought to fully fund public schools to ensure all Hudson Valley students receive a good public education. The final budget delivers the following investments:

### **Fully Funding Foundation Aid & Bolstering School Aid**

New York is fully funding Foundation Aid for public schools for the first time, initiated via a three-year phase-in by Hinchey and her Senate Majority colleagues in 2021, which ensured every K-12 school district received a minimum year-to-year increase of 3 percent. The final budget also includes the largest annual School Aid allocation of \$34.5 billion.

### **Universal Pre-K Expansion**

After delivering 1,000 full-day pre-K seats in her previous Senate District, Hinchey was successful in expanding pre-K programming to communities in her new district, SD-41. The final budget includes \$365 million to continue the state's commitment to phase in universal pre-K programming across New York State.

### **Boosting SUNY Funding**

As the representative of SUNY New Paltz and Columbia-Greene Community College, Hinchey successfully advocated for a final budget that rejects all SUNY tuition hikes for in-state students, and procured increases in general operating aid for SUNY of \$103 million. Hinchey also helped secure:

- \$150,000 for The Benjamin Center at SUNY New Paltz
- \$150,000 for the Dutchess Community College Housing & Food Insecurity Program

### **Bard Early College — \$461,000**

Hinchey also supported funding for the Bard Early College initiative, which helps bridge

socioeconomic gaps by allowing 11th and 12th-grade high school students to gain experience with college-level coursework and earn college credits for free.

**Bard Prison Initiative — \$150,000**

Hinchey supported funding for the Bard Prison Initiative (BPI), which enrolls incarcerated students in full-time programs that culminate in degrees from Bard College. The program has a proven record of reducing recidivism, saving taxpayer dollars, and returning justice-impacted individuals to their communities as productive members of society.

Hinchey created new funding to address the needs of volunteer firefighters and support for EMS providers. The final budget includes the following new investments:

**Volunteer Fire Services Capital Fund — \$25 Million**

The final budget includes Hinchey's proposal to create the first-ever Volunteer Fire Services Capital Fund, with an investment of \$25 million, which will help volunteer departments access the funds they need to update their equipment and their firehouses and maintain pace with the increasing demands of fire safety.

**EMS Recruitment, Retention, and Mental Health Support — \$1 Million**

The final budget includes \$1 million to support EMS recruitment and retention efforts and establish mental health and wellness programs, with \$300,000 to be disbursed by the NYS Department of Health in FY'24 and \$700,000 in FY'25.

**Expanding Access to Health Insurance for Volunteer EMS**

The final budget allows for emergency medical providers working with volunteer and not-for-profit emergency medical service departments to be eligible for the state health

insurance program regardless of their primary source of income.

### **Establishing an Emergency Medical Services Task Force**

The final budget directs the State EMS Council (SEMSCO) and Regional Councils (REMSCO) to create an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Task Force to study and improve EMS workforce training, recruitment, retention, benefits, and services statewide.

Hinchey also advocated for **\$750,000 to support the New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association**, which is included in the final budget and will aid professional fire departments, including the City of Kingston Fire Department.

Hinchey's proposal to create a true Upstate Film & TV Tax Credit is included in the final budget to encourage companies to produce feature films, television series, pilots, and other media in the Hudson Valley, supporting the growth of the local entertainment industry. The 10% tax credit can be used for local goods, services, and above the line labor costs, which will create production jobs and incentivize the use of local small businesses.

After securing the largest investment in rural and Upstate housing in last year's budget, Hinchey led the charge for a second year to bolster support for key programs that will increase the supply of safe, affordable housing in the Hudson Valley. Investments include:

### **Small Rental Development Initiative — \$7 Million**

Creates housing developments of under 20 units to meet the needs of rural and upstate communities.

### **ACCESS to Homes Program — \$3 Million**

Helps senior citizen homeowners and people with disabilities with the costs of modifying

their homes to meet accessibility needs.

#### **New York RESTORE Program — \$8.4 Million**

In order to meet demand, Hinchey championed a \$5 million increase to the RESTORE Program, which assists low-to-moderate income seniors and people with disabilities with emergency home repairs, including structural, electrical, plumbing, and heating repairs and appliance replacements. Given the increased demand for the program, Hinchey sponsored legislation that was signed into law to increase the maximum cost allowed per project to \$20,000 and expand construction deadlines to sixty days.

#### **Land Banks and Community Land Trusts — \$10 Million**

Rehabilitates old buildings and transitions them to affordable housing. The limiting factor for many of these projects is the lack of upfront capital to purchase homes and perform needed construction. A revolving acquisition fund will allow these organizations to acquire and flip zombie properties across the state and create more long-term affordable housing.

#### **Rural Preservation Program — \$7.55 Million**

Provides support to community-based not-for-profit corporations known as Rural Preservation Companies, which are the main conduit for implementing housing initiatives in the rural parts of the state, including mobile and manufactured home replacement, accessibility modifications, downtown revitalization, septic and well upgrades, and weatherization assistance.

#### **Rural Rental Assistance Program — \$21.7 Million**

Reduces the rent paid by low-income families who live in eligible Rural Rental Housing (RRH) and Farm Labor Housing (FLH) financed by the United States Department of



Agriculture.

**Affordable Housing Corporation — \$40.5 Million**

Supports homeownership through new construction, provides down payment and closing cost assistance, and rehabilitates owner-occupied housing.

**Homeowner Protection Program (HOPP) — \$40 Million**

HOPP is New York State's only homeowner retention program, which provides homeowners with free mortgage assistance services and legal representation.

**COVID Arrears Coverage through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program — \$391 Million**

The final budget includes \$391 million to cover Covid-era arrears for public housing authorities, private tenants, and Section 8 tenants, providing economic relief to those at risk of homelessness or experiencing housing instability.

**Lead Abatement Program — \$20 Million**

The Lead Abatement Program will be administered through the Housing Trust Fund Corporation and used to eliminate lead-based paint hazards in housing outside of New York City.

**Manufactured Home Advantage Program — \$5 Million**

Offers affordable financing for the acquisition and/or rehabilitation of manufactured home communities.

**First-Time Homeowners Program — \$25 Million**

**Main Street Program — \$4.2 Million**

Provides financial resources and technical assistance to help local governments and not-for-

profit organizations revitalize historic downtowns, including façade improvements and streetscape enhancements.

Investment championed by Hinchey to advance New York's climate goals and environmental protection include:

**\$500,000 for Smart Ecosystem Management of Forestlands:** The final budget includes Hinchey's proposal to pay farmers who use carbon sequestration methods to manage the forest on their properties. Across the state, farmers are doing their part to fight the climate crisis through carbon capture, and this fund will further incentivize that work, helping New York meet its CLCPA goals and providing revenue for farmers.

**Catskill & Adirondack Park Wilderness Protection — \$8 Million**

The final budget includes \$8 million for shared stewardship efforts in the Catskill and Adirondack Parks, a funding line innovated by Hinchey in 2021 to ensure equitable protection of the Catskills.

**Catskill Center & Catskill Mountainkeeper — \$100,000**

Hinchey succeeded in securing \$50,000 for both the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development and Catskill Mountainkeeper to support their stewardship programs.

**Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) — \$400 Million**

The Environmental Protection Fund was created by the NYS Legislature in 1993 as a crucial source of funding for capital projects that protect New York's environment and fight the Climate Crisis. The EPF allows New York to protect its drinking water, food supply, air, parks, and state lands, as well as undertake both local and statewide programs that reduce

pollution, support climate change mitigation, and combat invasive species, among other priorities. Project highlights funded in the EPF this year include:

- \$500 million for the Clean Water and Infrastructure Act
- \$19 million for Municipal Waste Reduction and Recycling Projects
- \$13 million for Environmental Justice
- \$1 million for Municipal EV fast chargers pilot programs

### **Climate Resilient Farms — \$15.3 Million**

The goal of this competitive grants program is to increase the resiliency of New York farms and help farmers implement best climate practices on their farms. The CRF line includes programs enacted under Hinchey's landmark Soil Health & Climate Resiliency Act to assist farmers in improving soil health and crop yields while reducing carbon emissions.

### **Establishing the Decarbonization Action Plan for State Buildings — \$30 Million**

The final budget includes a proposal led by Hinchey to decarbonize state-owned buildings through a local, union-led workforce. The proposal directs the New York Power Authority (NYPA) to establish a \$30 million program to develop an action plan to fully decarbonize and achieve zero on-site emissions for State-owned campuses and facilities by 2040, ensuring labor protections and standards for any projects resulting from the action plan. New York State emits more **building air pollution** than any other state. Approximately **30 percent** of greenhouse gas emissions come from the combustion of fossil fuels that power buildings, while **60 percent** of carbon emissions are linked to heating and powering. This proposal will help New York meet the goals of the landmark Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), which calls for an 85% reduction in economy-wide greenhouse gas

emissions by 2050.

### **Passing the Build Public Renewables Act**

This legislation empowers NYPA to build, own, and operate additional renewable energy resources and deliver affordable renewable energy supply to existing customers to support the state in meeting generation targets in the CLCPA and the Climate Action Council's Scoping plan. The bill will deliver cost benefits to taxpayers, including lowering energy bills to NYPA customers, and will require NYPA to phase out its fossil fuel power plants by 2030.

### **Implementing the All-Electric Buildings Act**

The final budget requires all new construction smaller than seven stories and smaller than 100,000 square feet for industrial or commercial buildings to be all-electric by December 31, 2025. All new construction, regardless of size, must be all-electric by December 31, 2028. As renewable energy technology continues to progress, all-electric buildings will see major energy savings as compared to older buildings that still rely on fossil fuels.

Key investments to expand rural and Upstate healthcare include:

- **The final budget delivers the largest Medicaid reimbursement rate increase in two decades and \$1 billion in healthcare capital funding.** Medicaid reimbursement rates for hospital inpatient services will increase by 7.5%. For nursing homes and assisted living programs, the rate will increase by 6.5% for outpatient services. New York's Medicaid program is the second largest in the country, and Medicaid reimbursement rates are used to pay healthcare providers for supplying care to those who receive Medicaid-covered services.

- **Advances a 4% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase** for the human services sector, including mental health workers.
- **Makes one of the largest investments in mental health in a generation with \$1 billion for transforming the continuum of care** by increasing inpatient psychiatric treatment capacity, expanding outpatient services and insurance coverage.
- **Ensures medication abortion remains available to New Yorkers** in the event of an adverse Supreme Court decision regarding mifepristone. The final budget also prohibits medical malpractice insurers from taking adverse action against providers that prescribe misoprostol for abortion and allocates \$100.7 million to fund abortion providers. The budget also expands access to abortion care for SUNY and CUNY students and over-the-counter contraception.
- **\$179.2 million for the Opioid Settlement Fund** and the creation of a task force to study mental health crisis response and diversion for people experiencing mental health, substance use, or alcohol use crises.
- **\$500 million for financially distressed hospitals**
- **Wage increases for home care providers** serving seniors, the disabled, and the injured will remain at \$2 for 2023 and will increase to \$2.55 beginning January 2024, increasing by 5 cents each year until January 2027, when it will be adjusted annually depending on inflation, eventually hitting \$3 per hour.

- **\$1.2 million to support Rural Health Care Development and Rural Health Network Development**
- **\$500,000 for Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Wellness and Equity Health Programs and Services**
- **\$150,000 for the Brain Injury Alliance for a Continuum for Care Program**
- **\$250,000 for the Maternal Mental Health Workgroup**

The final budget resolution makes the following investments championed by Hinchey to support small businesses and Upstate arts organizations:

- **Small Business Innovation Grants**

The final budget also allocates over \$12 million in Legislative Grants for businesses, including the creation of a matching grant program for the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer grant programs, which afford small businesses the opportunity to engage in research and development activities that stimulate technological innovation.

- **Minority and Women-Owned Business Development and Lending Program — \$2 Million**

Hinchey advocated for funding to provide financial assistance to minority- and women-owned businesses, as well as to projects and programs that support entrepreneurship among minority persons and women in New York State.

- **Tourism Matching Grants Program — \$3.5 Million**

Led by Hinchey, the FY'24 budget provides \$1 million in additional funding for the Tourism Matching Grants Program for a total of \$3.5 million, which is used by county and regional Tourism Promotion Agencies to help communities attract visitors and investment.

- **Alive! Downtowns Theatres — \$5 Million**

Hinchey successfully advocated for funding to support a coalition of 13 not-for-profit historic performing arts centers, including Ulster Performing Arts Center (UPAC) in Kingston, which are all economic, educational, and cultural engines serving Upstate.

- Hinchey championed **\$1 million for Arts Mid-Hudson** and **\$8 million for Regional Arts Councils outside of New York City.**

- **Empire State Development's Division of Science, Technology and Innovation (NYSTAR)** funds 13 Centers of Excellence to foster collaboration between the academic research community and the business sector to develop and commercialize new products and technologies and expand technology-related businesses and employment. The final budget provides \$14 million for Centers of Excellence, providing \$1M to each center, and \$15 million for Centers for Advanced Technology, providing \$1M to each center.

**Addressing Local Railway Safety — \$1.75 Million**

Hinchey helped lead the charge to increase funding for more State Railroad Inspectors in the FY'24 budget. Inspired by fact-finding boat tours of the Hudson River with Riverkeeper, where she surveyed the deteriorating rail lines in Ulster County and across the Hudson Valley — and in light of the Ohio train car derailment — Hinchey secured \$1.75 million to hire

ten new State Railroad Inspectors. This funding will help ensure that freight rail lines, especially those in the Hudson Valley, are operating in the manner safest for communities. Hinchey, who chairs the Senate Agriculture and Food Committee, was proud to fight for state funding to support New York farmers and local food production, continuing the historic state investment in this sector over the last few years. The final budget agreement includes funding for the following:

**Nourish New York — \$50 Million**

The final budget includes funding for the Nourish New York program, through which food banks receive state funding to purchase New York farm products to feed residents in need.

**Double Up Food Bucks Program — \$2 Million**

Hinchey succeeded in securing \$2 million for the Double Up Food Bucks Program, which provides SNAP-eligible New Yorkers with a \$1 for \$1 match to buy New York fruits and vegetables at participating grocery stores.

**Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) — \$56.5 Million**

Due to Hinchey's advocacy, the final budget invests \$56.5 million in HPNAP, which will help emergency food providers better support the demand for hunger relief at a time when food prices have skyrocketed.

**Expanding Farm-to-School Food Procurement Thresholds**

Increases the purchasing threshold from \$100,000 to \$150,000 so that school districts and BOCES can more easily purchase food from New York farmers and stimulate long-term investments in local farm businesses.



**Agri-Business Child Development program (ABCD) — \$10.41 Million**

Provides child care and social services to farmworker families

**Cornell Farm Labor Specialist and Bilingual Translator — \$401,000**

Provides Cornell with the ability to hire another Cornell Farm Labor Specialist, a position important for communicating up-to-date information to farmers and farmworkers

**Cornell CALS Pro-Dairy Climate Specialist — \$1.463 Million**

Supports the continued employment of a full-time specialist who works with New York dairy farmers to ensure they have the information and knowledge base to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and meet the 15% GHG emissions goals set by the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act for agriculture.

**Socially/Economically Disadvantaged Farmers Grant Program — \$1 Million**

Provides grant funding to help expand opportunities in agriculture to farmers who face disproportionate social or economic barriers.

**Beginning Farmers Grant Program — \$1 Million**

This program provides grant support to help young and beginning farmers invest in their businesses and get their operations off the ground.

**Farmland for a New Generation Program — \$500,000**

Developed to help retiring farmers transition their lands to those entering the trade.

Hinchey was successful in securing state investments to help local highway departments keep heavily-traveled roads safe for New York drivers, including the following:

- **Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program — \$598 Million**

Rehabilitates local roads and bridges.

- **Extreme Winter Recovery Program — \$100 Million**

Addresses the impacts of severe weather on our roads and protects the safety of New York drivers.

- **State Touring Routes Program — \$140 Million**

Helps municipalities offset the cost of capital projects on New York-signed touring routes.

Hinchey helped secure funding in the final budget for several local programs to support veterans, including the following:

**Legal Services of the Hudson Valley Veterans & Military Families Advocacy Project — \$405,000**

Hinchey secured funding to ensure Legal Services of the Hudson Valley (LSHV) can continue to assist veterans and their families in achieving economic stability by overcoming barriers to employment and housing, gaining access to disability compensation, pension programs, free or low-cost medical care, and higher education. Other LSHV programs supported in the budget include \$400,000 for Housing and Kinship Caregivers Services, \$151,667 for LGBTQ+ services, and \$90,000 for the Domestic Violence Project.

**Capital Upgrades at Belleayre Mountain Ski Center — \$500,000**

To maintain this Catskills recreational attraction, Hinchey was instrumental in securing funding to support capital upgrades at Belleayre Mountain Ski Center.