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| <p><u>Chair</u><br/>AGING</p> <p><u>Member</u><br/>BANKS<br/>CITIES I<br/>CULTURAL AFFAIRS, TOURISM, PARKS AND<br/>RECREATION<br/>EDUCATION<br/>HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION AND<br/>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT<br/>SOCIAL SERVICES</p> | <p>THE SENATE<br/>STATE OF NEW YORK</p>  <p><b>CORDELL CLEARE</b><br/>SENATOR, 30<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT</p> | <p>☐ Albany Office:<br/>Room 905<br/>Legislative Office Building<br/>Albany, New York 12247<br/>(518) 455-2441<br/>Fax (518) 426-6809</p> <p>☐ District Office:<br/>Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.<br/>State Office Building<br/>163 West 125th St., Rm. 912<br/>New York, New York 10027<br/>(212) 222-7315<br/>Fax (212) 678-0001</p> |
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## **SENATOR CORDELL CLEARE'S STATEMENT ON THE ADOPTED 2024 BUDGET**

The 2024 New York State Budget negotiations were very grueling and challenging; yet. I am proud that we made a great deal of progress in a number of issue areas.

As Chair of the Aging Committee, I was dismayed by the lack of investment offered by the Governor.

However, the legislature negotiated substantial improvements in the final budget that we passed, including \$10 million to close the waitlist for senior

services. It isn't everything we wanted, but it was certainly more than what was presented to us in the beginning. I am looking forward to closing this waitlist forever with my bill, Senate 8187-A, which establishes and funds the "Close the Waitlist Fund."

We built on the increases to the NYS Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) by adding to the funding this year. We also provided \$1 million to provide nursing services statewide to all Naturally-Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs). This budget provides funding to keep groups running so that they can empower our older New Yorkers, such as the Medicare Rights Center, New York Statewide Senior Action Council, Live On New York, SAGE, and other truly essential groups.

After being hammered during the COVID pandemic with nurses leaving or retiring, we are experiencing a shortage of nurses in our nursing homes and hospitals across the board; being able to refresh and rebuild the workforce with training programs such as SkillSpring is vital. The New Jewish Home in my district became the pilot center for people as young as high school age

who can get their certification and become Certified Nursing Assistants. We have put \$500,000 into this venture again this year, to match last year's contribution. Young people get a great career in healthcare, and a great paying job, and seniors get the energetic and dedicated staffing they need in nursing homes.

Furthermore, we:

- Provided \$800 million in support for distressed and safety-net hospitals.
- Invested \$33 million to enhance mental health services targeting first responders and aiding individuals with mental illnesses involved in the criminal justice system.
- Passed the first in the nation Paid Prenatal Leave, which will provide 20 hours of paid sick time for pregnant employees to use for their prenatal care visits.

- Codified the Reproductive Freedom and Equity Grant Program to provide funding for abortion providers and non-profit entities to support increased access to abortion.
- Enacted the Community Doula Expansion Grant Program to provide funding to community-based organizations for recruitment and retention and startup and administrative costs to increase the number of community doulas.

Education remains vitally important, which is why the adopted budget gives an increase to the Foundation Aid of \$934 million over the current school year, which is an increase of \$430 million. We also got an additional \$100 million for universal Pre-K, which will allow school districts throughout the state to serve at least 90% of the eligible 4-year-olds; plus \$103.2 million for after-school programs, an increase of \$20 million from last year. The budget also reflected greater support for SUNY and CUNY schools - increasing their operating aid for both systems; as well as robust support for SUNY hospitals providing critical healthcare for our communities. The budget increased funding for

higher education's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) by \$53 million, doubling the current TAP award.

As the former Chair of the Women's Issues Committee and a mother, maternal health has always been a priority of mine. I have passed many bills to empower women, making sure they have instant access to healthcare coverage when pregnant, including:

Passing the first in the nation Paid Prenatal Leave. We enacted the Community Doula Expansion Grant Program to provide funding to support the retention and recruitment of doulas. We are also requiring paid breaks for breast milk expression in the workplace.

Housing was the most challenging area in which to make progress. The Governor and others frankly insisted upon too many programs that prioritize profit for developers over housing as a fundamental human right. The Good Cause Eviction Bill that we passed is a mere baseline and we must do better. I was relentless in pursuing funds for NYCHA which the federal government has continued to divest in, leading to the suffering of residents living with deteriorating systems and infrastructures. The Conference put \$140

million into New York City public housing to address the challenging, much-needed repairs. We also put \$80 million into grants for Mitchell Lamas. Moreover, this budget also added the crime of deed theft to protect our older New Yorkers in particular.

I was very excited that we were able to garner \$350 million for the New Supplemental Tax Credit for families eligible for Empire State

Child Tax credit to provide direct support to working families. In addition, we ensure that all children from birth to age 6 remain continuously enrolled in Medicaid or Child Health Plus.

For the Clean Water Infrastructure Act, we restored \$250M over the Executive proposal, bringing the total to \$500M for vital clean water projects. We reversed cuts to the Environmental Protection Fund; and we committed \$1B to enhance our parks and allocated \$47M to plant 25 million trees by 2033, boosting biodiversity and fighting climate change.

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