

Guest Column from



for the week of January 27, 2025
“Tune in to the state budget adoption process”

Budget adoption season is underway at the State Capitol, which means, first, that joint Senate-Assembly public hearings on Governor Kathy Hochul’s 2025-2026 Executive Budget proposal kick off on Monday and will remain underway until the end of February.

Conducted jointly by the Senate Finance Committee, and the Assembly Ways and Means Committee, these forums examine and critique the governor’s proposal in detail and solicit testimony from state agency officials, public policy and fiscal experts, local government representatives, business leaders, educators, farmers, law enforcement, and many other advocates.

I have served as the Ranking Member on the Finance Committee since 2021 and continue to welcome having a direct voice on the legislative committee most responsible for overseeing the adoption of the state’s annual budget. These hearings highlight the course that the New York government is looking to set for short- and long-term fiscal practices and responsibilities. They also begin setting the stage for the Legislature’s negotiations with the governor over a final state budget.

Most importantly, they are a chance for the public to learn more about what’s being planned by Governor Hochul and Albany [REDACTED] legislative majority leaders for the future direction of New York State.

Remember that the governor has proposed a 2025-26 budget that starts at \$252 billion, an astounding number in a state that over the past several years has been no stranger to big-spending budgets. The governor’s proposal is already an approximately *\$19-billion increase* over her proposed budget last year, which was record-breaking. In other words, the governor and the [REDACTED] leaders of the Senate and Assembly majorities – the biggest-spending Legislature in state history -- will start final negotiations over a new budget looking to increase state spending by at least \$19 billion. In other words, it’s likely to go significantly higher.

My initial reaction when the governor unveiled her proposal last week was the following, “Governor Hochul and Albany [REDACTED] majorities are addicted to spending. They can’t stop. It’s out of control and it’s shocking. Despite all the warning signs, Governor Hochul keeps feeding a ‘spend, spend, spend’ addiction that will never make New York more affordable. It will keep driving hard-working taxpayers and middle-class families out of the state. It will keep killing jobs and strangling local economies. It keeps ignoring the reality that New York remains one of America’s highest-taxed, least affordable, most debt-ridden and

overregulated states, and that we're leading the nation in population loss. The Albany [REDACTED] majority spending addiction over the past six years has put in place massive, long-term spending commitments -- and with massive commitments looming in their pursuit of a radical climate agenda -- that will never be affordable or sustainable for state and local taxpayers, small businesses and manufacturers, and continually hard-pressed upstate communities, economies, and workers."

Our Senate [REDACTED] minority conference will continue to be a voice for lower taxes, less regulation, greater accountability, economic growth, job creation, and more common sense on state fiscal practices. We welcome this year's budget hearings, at this critical time, to put a spotlight on a range of policies and programs that will decide the future and strength of our local communities and economies.

In my view, we need to keep working against New York State tax and regulatory mindset that puts our businesses and manufacturers at a competitive disadvantage, imposes red tape that strangles local economies, or prioritizes higher and higher spending, overtaxing, outrageous mandates, and burdensome overregulation.

Our Senate conference also recently unveiled a "Liberate New York" legislative agenda that proposes a range of policies focusing on public safety and security, economic growth and job creation, tax relief and regulatory reform, and affordability initiatives to try to reverse New York's nation-leading population loss. You can read more details of our proposal on my Senate website, www.omara.nysenate.gov.

The first budget hearings begin this week and cover Agriculture/Parks and Recreation on Monday, the hot button topic of Energy/Environmental Conservation on Tuesday, and Elementary and Secondary Education on Wednesday. During the weeks ahead, we'll examine economic and workforce development, health care and human services, and public protection, among numerous topics. Archived videos of each hearing will be available on the state Senate website at www.nysenate.gov/events.

These hearings take a lot of time -- and they cover plenty of complex and detailed ground -- but they provide the first glimpse inside this critical decision-making process getting underway at the state capital. They can be viewed on the Senate website listed above, as well as on my previously mentioned Senate website.

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