



Dear Friends,

We have a state budget and it's a good one!

On April 20th, the Legislature adopted and the Governor signed the \$237 billion NYS budget for fiscal year 2025, which covers the period April 1, 2024 through March 31, 2025. While late by 20 days, **the budget is fiscally sound and provides well for the people of the 93rd Assembly District and the state as a whole.** The budget resulted from long negotiations between the Legislature and the Governor's administration.

Below please find highlights from the budget, as well as an update regarding the paving of Route 35, information about various upcoming events, a new law that is in effect for drivers (avoid that ticket!), as well as a new law that gives veterans and Gold Star families free lifetime access to state parks, historic sites, and recreational facilities.

Highlights of the 2024-25 State Budget

As with any budget, the final product was a compromise among many interests throughout the state. While not a perfect budget – none ever are – overall, I am pleased with the final product. Here are the highlights:

Education Funds Restored

One of the key areas of disagreement between the Legislature and the Governor was the drastic cuts in state aid to school districts proposed in the Executive Budget. These cuts would have resulted in reductions for all but one of the school districts in the 93rd Assembly District.

My colleagues and I pushed back strongly against the proposed cuts. We urged Assembly leadership to provide in the “One House Budget” (our response to the Governor’s budget) complete restoration of all funding, retaining the Hold Harmless provision (which states that no district will receive less aid than the previous year) and increasing the inflationary component of the formula for Foundation Aid (the largest portion of aid to districts), which the Governor proposed cutting.

I am pleased to report that the final budget retains the Hold Harmless provision and provides a 2.8% inflation factor in calculating Foundation Aid. I thank the community for urging the Governor to fully restore funding.

The final budget also includes increased funding for Schools for the Blind and Deaf (4201 Schools), restores funding for Teacher Resource and Computer Training Centers, and provides funding for financial literacy curriculum and updates to the Holocaust curriculum. It will also establish a NYS Zero-Emission School Bus Resource Center to assist school districts in their transition to zero-emission school buses.

The budget also maintains our commitment to our state’s exceptional higher education institutions. For SUNY, the budget includes \$60 million in additional operating aid, \$60 million in additional capital funding, and an additional \$8 million for SUNY community colleges. For CUNY, the budget includes \$40 million in additional operating aid, \$40 million in additional capital funding, and an additional \$5.3 million for CUNY community colleges.

Housing, Tenant Protections, and Property Owner Relief and Incentives

In contrast to last year's budget negotiations, the enacted budget took significant action in enacting a statewide housing policy – the most far-reaching in decades. **This new, comprehensive housing plan will spur the development of affordable housing while providing robust tenant protections to help New Yorkers stay in their homes.**

Unlike the controversial housing plan proposed in last year's budget, this plan is devoid of construction mandates or pre-emption of local zoning and environmental review. It includes both tenant and homeowner protections. Among them are **protections against residential and commercial deed theft and making explicitly clear in state law that a squatter is a person to whom a landlord-tenant relationship does not exist.**

Within New York City and by local option in the rest of the state (with substantial flexibility to the locality in setting the parameters), **a version of “good cause” tenant protections was included in the final budget**, which prohibits the removal of a tenant by eviction or refusal to renew a lease without “good cause.” Established “good cause” includes nonpayment of rent, illegal activities, recovery for personal use, and nuisance.

Additionally, a tenant can claim an unreasonable rent increase as a defense during a non-payment eviction proceeding if the rent increase exceeds the lower of five percent plus the change in the consumer price index or 10 percent. The budget also provides new tax incentives for the creation of accessory dwelling units, both within New York City and in the rest of the state, including real property tax exemptions.

I am proud to report that, to incentivize the building of affordable housing outside New York City, **a provision for which I advocated is included in the budget to provide real property tax exemptions to affordable housing developers.** The incentives are for the new construction of (or conversion to) rental buildings outside New York City that have at least 10 units and include significant affordable housing. Should they choose to participate, municipalities will now have the ability to opt in to two different exemption programs.

Infrastructure Funding

I am pleased that the budget provides for significant (and much-needed) funding for infrastructure, providing \$1.3 billion for capital aid to localities, which includes increases of \$60 million for the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPs) and \$40 million for State Route NY.

The budget also provides:

- \$200 million for Bridge NY
- \$150 million for Pave NY
- \$100 million for Extreme Winter Recovery funding
- \$100 million for the Local Pave our Potholes program

The budget also safeguards funding for our roads by enhancing toll enforcement, including provisions relating to covered or obscured license plates and non-payment of toll liabilities.

Investments in the Environment

The 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) is a nation-leading blueprint for combatting the climate crisis. Since its adoption, the State Legislature has been working to make the investments necessary to implement it.

The adopted budget takes important steps, funding the Environmental Protection Fund at \$400 million and allocating \$500 million for clean water infrastructure, \$250 million above the Governor's proposed

budget. This funding is critical to addressing PFAS in public water supplies and to helping provide capital for wastewater projects.

I was disappointed that the NY HEAT Act, which would have eliminated ratepayer subsidies for new gas service and capped increases in rates, was not included in the budget.

Retail Theft, Hate Crimes & Cracking Down on Illegal Cannabis Shops

Recognizing that retail theft is on the rise, the enacted budget creates new crimes of assault on a retail worker and of fostering the sale of stolen goods. It also amends the larceny statute to allow for the aggregation of the value of retail property stolen pursuant to a common scheme or plan, and exempts application of the persistent felony offender status from applying to these offenses.

The budget also provides \$25.2 million in new funding for a dedicated State Police team to build cases against organized retail theft rings and create a new State Police enforcement unit. It also allocates \$10 million in additional funding for district attorneys to prosecute property crime cases and \$5 million in additional funding to build the capacity of local law enforcement efforts to combat retail theft.

To help combat hate crimes, the budget provides \$35 million for the safety of organizations at risk of hate crimes, and includes \$30 million for organizations that benefit the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community.

To help with the rise of illegal cannabis shops, the budget gives the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) the authority to padlock illegal cannabis businesses. Egregious actors would be padlocked immediately; all others would be padlocked on second inspection. Businesses would have seven days to request a hearing to appeal; if a hearing is requested, the hearing would be held within three days and a decision would be rendered within four days.

To be considered an egregious actor, a store would have to be engaged in one or more of the following:

- Documented sales to minors
- Unlicensed processing of cannabis
- Violent behavior toward investigators that express an intent to not comply
- Reports of hospitalization due to consumption of their products
- Close proximity to houses of worship, schools or public youth facilities
- Sales of cannabis that has not been lawfully tested

Changes in Managed Long Term Care - CDPAP

Now to one aspect of the budget that I was not pleased with and, in fact, actively spoke out against. The budget incorporates a significant change in the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP), which provides support to those with disabilities and chronic illnesses. It consolidates, on a phased-in basis, the responsibilities performed by over 600 fiscal intermediaries (FI) into a single statewide FI. The plan, which the Governor proposed, is aimed at achieving \$200 million in savings by reducing costs - FI's receive a 15% fee for their services while the single FI would receive 5%.

Like many who have contacted me over this change, **my colleagues and I voiced considerable concerns over potential lapses or reductions in services to the most vulnerable among us** – people with disabilities, the elderly, and those with chronic illnesses requiring long-term care. Among the modifications since its original introduction is a clarification that the NYS Department of Health will oversee the system and will issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) to entities with substantial experience. The RFP will provide that the statewide FI must have demonstrated cultural and language competencies, experience working with elderly individuals and people with disabilities, and provide Statewide FI services in at least one other state. The Statewide FI must also subcontract with all 11 Independent Living Centers (ILCs) performing FI services. and at least one subcontracted FI will be retained in each rate-setting region.

The enacted budget also rejects the Governor's proposal to save \$200.4 million by cutting wage parity benefits for personal assistants in the CDPAP program, which would have resulted in a direct wage cut of \$2.54 per hour for workers in New York City and \$1.67 per hour for other downstate personal assistants.

The implementation of the plan will also require at least one year.

Understandably, many people in the disabilities community are upset with this huge change. **To ensure that no one receiving services suffers a lapse or reduction in those services, it is incumbent upon the Legislature to be vigilant in its oversight. I take this very seriously and pledge to do just that.**

[Route 35 Paving Scheduled](#)

Some of you may have heard that **the repaving of Route 35 has finally been scheduled!** And for those who haven't, I'm certainly very pleased to report it.

The repaving will cover the **length of the road from the intersection with Route 22 in Katonah, east to Bouton Road in South Salem.** There also will be work done on the portion of the DOT right of way between the road and the Meadows property to address run-off issues.

We have been advised by the NYSDOT that we should start to see some site work (prep work, street marking, etc.) at the end of April/beginning of May, **with the actual paving scheduled to begin in mid-July (weather-dependent).** The work will be done at night.

You can learn more about the project by [clicking here](#).



It was a team effort to get us to this point, working with Senator Pete Harckham, Lewisboro Town Supervisor Tony Gonçalves, and County Legislator Erika Pierce. We worked very closely with the Regional Director of the NYS Department of Transportation, pressing for the project to take place.

We will continue to keep you apprised of further updates as we receive them. **In the meantime, please continue to report potholes on Route 35 (and other state routes) by calling 1-800-POTHOLE AND** to call the DOT residency in your area to report state roads in poor conditions. The residencies for our district are:

- **For North Salem, Pound Ridge, Lewisboro, Bedford, Mount Kisco, New Castle & North Castle - (914) 232-3060**
 - **For White Plains & Harrison - (914) 592-6557**
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[TOMORROW: Diverse Abilities Job Fair](#)

Reminder! Tomorrow, the County will once again be holding the Diverse Abilities Job Fair, from 11am-3 pm at the Westchester County Center. [To register, please click here.](#)

County Executive George Latimer invites you to join us at

WESTCHESTER
 **Diverse Abilities**
JOB FAIR

APRIL 30

OPEN HOUSE
11AM - 1PM

ONE-ON-ONE
1:30PM - 3PM

WESTCHESTER COUNTY CENTER

FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT **PART TIME EMPLOYMENT** **SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT**

This job fair is open to all people who are differently abled. Come and connect with White Plains employers and interview on the spot.

EMPLOYERS INCLUDE:
Amazon, Good Temps, Liberty Lines Transit, NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, Southern Westchester BOCES, Westchester County, and more.

Pre-registration is required. All registered attendees will receive a follow up email to sign up for time slots to meet with interviewers.

REGISTER:
rb.gy/ihxfd3



For more information or for help with registration, contact:
Jeff Zitofsky at 914-995-2956

     

[May 9th Inaugural NYS AAPI Summit](#)

The NYS Asian Pacific American (APA) Task Force, of which I am a member, is hosting its inaugural NYS AAPI Summit in Albany. I hope you'll join us!

The theme of this inaugural summit is Empowerment through Representation. **Join the APA Task Force for a day of community building, learning, and celebration.** Connect with AAPI legislators, leaders, and advocates. Gain insights from inspiring speakers and participate in engaging workshops. This community event is sponsored by Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York and The Asian American Foundation.

Whether you're a student, activist, or community member, this event is for you.

[Click here to register](#) (space is limited - registration deadline May 3rd).



[May 11th Coffee & Conversation](#)

I am pleased to be joining NYS Senator Shelley Mayer for her Coffee & Conversation on Saturday, May 11th, from 1-2 pm, at the North Castle Community Center. Please join us!

[Click here to RSVP.](#)

A light brown poster for "COFFEE & CONVERSATIONS". The title is in large, bold, brown letters. Below the title is a circular portrait of NYS Senator Shelley Mayer. The text reads: "A Discussion Series with NYS Senator Shelley Mayer and Her Colleagues in the NYS Assembly". Below that, it says "RSVP: bit.ly/CoffeeConversationSD37". There is a horizontal line. Below the line, it says "With Assemblyman Steve Otis Friday, May 10 • 9:30 - 10:30 a.m." and "Damiano Community Center Game Room 281 Midland Ave., Rye, NY 10580". Another horizontal line. Below that, it says "NEXT UP: With Assemblymember Chris Burdick Saturday, May 11 • 1 - 2 p.m." and "North Castle Community Center 10 Clove Rd., White Plains, NY 10603". At the bottom, it says "Please join Senator Shelley Mayer and her colleagues in the Assembly for Coffee and Conversations across SD-37. More dates and locations will be announced." There is a small illustration of a coffee cup at the bottom right.

Move Over Law Expanded

Updated law in effect! Drivers are now required to slow down or move over when *any type of vehicle is disabled or stopped on the side of a highway or parkway*. Previously, drivers were required to slow down or move over for law enforcement officers, emergency workers, tow and service vehicle operators and other maintenance workers stopped along roadways while performing their duties. The law has now been expanded to include all vehicles.



Help keep our roadways safe and avoid a ticket! [Click here for more information.](#)

Don't Leave College Aid on the Table!

Last year, NY high school students left over \$200 million in federal aid unclaimed by not filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Don't leave money on the table!

Complete the FAFSA today. It's free and opens the door to federal and state aid and other scholarships. Find help and resources for New Yorkers at hesc.ny.gov/FAFSAReady.



[Free Lifetime Access to State Parks for Veterans & Gold Star Families](#)

Veterans and Gold Star Families should always be recognized and honored for the incredible sacrifices they've made for our country.

A new law now in effect gives them free lifetime access to state parks, historic sites and recreational facilities in New York State. [Click here to learn more.](#)



[Happy Passover!](#)

Finally, to all those who are celebrating, **I wish you and your family a happy and joyous Passover.**

I am also keeping in my prayers the Israeli hostages and their families, who cannot be together for this celebration. **It is my fervent hope that they will be reunited soon.**



As always, **please do not hesitate to reach out to my office with any questions or if there is any assistance we can provide.** You can always reach me at burdickc@nyassembly.gov or by calling (914) 244-4450. My staff and I are always ready to help. Please also follow me on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) for continued up-to-date information.

Miss any of our previous newsletters? You can [find them here](#).

Sincerely yours,



DISTRICT OFFICE

100 South Bedford Road
Suite 150
Mount Kisco, NY 10549
914-244-4450

ALBANY OFFICE

LOB 417
Albany, NY 12248
518-455-5397

Assembly District 93 | burdickc@nyassembly.gov