



Assemblyman Ken Zebrowski

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Summer 2023

Dear Neighbor:

This year's budget negotiations were long, but important, and I fought to ensure that it delivers for Rocklanders. This newsletter includes some highlights of this year's budget.

The 2023-24 budget delivers for our families by fully funding our schools and providing free meals for needy students. It includes important policies to improve public safety by cracking down on gun violence and giving judges more discretion to set bail. Furthermore, it sets the stage for renewable energy projects and provides critical infrastructure funding to repair bridges and roads.

Importantly, the final budget also rejects policies and proposals that would negatively impact our communities, like SUNY/CUNY tuition increases and housing policies that take control away from localities. It rejects tax increases and preserves all STAR and enhanced STAR benefits.

As we kick off summer, I am looking forward to being back in the district and seeing many of you at the numerous events in the months ahead.

If there is any way I can assist you or answer any questions about the programs outlined in this newsletter, please contact my office.

Sincerely,

Fully Funding Education



This year's budget invests in our children and young adults so that every New Yorker has an opportunity to learn. The State Budget increased total school funding by \$3 billion over last year, totaling \$34 billion, including \$24 billion to fully fund Foundation Aid for the first time. Rockland schools will also see a significant increase in funding, totaling \$89 million more than last year. Below are the funding numbers and the increase over last year for schools in our district:

	2022-23 Total Funding	2023-24 Total Funding	Increase over 2022-23
Clarkstown	\$47,152,418	\$58,941,555	25%
Nanuet	\$16,544,357	\$21,756,192	31.5%
Haverstraw North Public	\$94,804,097	\$112,802,607	18.98%
Nyack	\$16,531,223	\$19,532,650	18.16%
East Ramapo	\$109,054,997	\$145,803,551	33.7%

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Fully Funding Education *(continued from page 1)*

To help provide more pre-K slots, a total of \$150 million in new funding was included, with \$50 million made available for the statewide UPK grant. The budget also includes a provision to provide free school meals for young learners that will help address food insecurity and ensure every student can access nutritious meals.

I'm also proud that this year's budget rejects tuition increases for SUNY and CUNY undergraduates, while increasing operating aid by \$178 million over last year.



Assemblyman Zebrowski speaks with Lieutenant General Steven Gilland, 61st Superintendent of the United States Military Academy, on West Point Day, an annual tradition since 1952 in the Assembly, on April 28, 2023.

Keeping Local Zoning Decisions Local

Throughout budget negotiations, I heard from many constituents who were concerned about the proposed “New York Housing Compact,” which would have taken away local control of zoning and land use decisions. While it is important that we increase housing opportunities for younger, middle-aged, and senior New Yorkers, local communities must retain their zoning powers over the projects. This proposal was ultimately rejected, and I am proud to have advocated to preserve the power of our local governments.

Improving Public Safety

This year's budget protects the health and safety of all New Yorkers. We included a \$1 billion investment in mental health services to ensure that everyone can receive vital care and avoid crisis situations. A \$1 million investment to establish the Daniel's Law Task Force will also help improve responses during mental health or substance-use related crises.

It also makes important changes to bail reform, by eliminating the requirement that judges consider the least restrictive option and giving them more discretion to set bail. This approach strikes an important balance that allows judges to consider a range of options for setting bail. Funding is also made available for community programs to help stop gun violence and for Asian American and Pacific Islander community groups to defend against hate crimes.

In addition, to help our volunteer fire departments, \$25 million in capital funding was also included in the budget.



In March, Assemblyman Zebrowski met with highway supervisors from Rockland County in Albany to discuss their budget needs and how the state can be supportive.

Investing in Local Roads and Enhancing Public Transportation

In January, I took over as Chair of the Corporations, Authorities and Commissions Committee which oversees the MTA and all public authorities and commissions. I had a goal of bringing increased attention to West of Hudson commuting issues while also improving the overall services and efficiency of the MTA. This budget delivers on both fronts. The MTA's COVID induced operating deficit was closed and services were increased; further, **Rockland and other Counties outside New York City will not see any increased taxes or costs.**

Significant funding is also provided in the budget to upgrade local roads and bridges, including a \$60 million increase for the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement program (CHIPS).

Reducing Costs for Families

Continuing the work accomplished last year to help families facing rising costs, this budget includes several tax cuts to help families. The Child Tax Credit is expanded to include families with children 4 and under. This expansion means that 580,000 filers will benefit, with a total savings of \$225 million. In addition to this expansion, the budget rejects new tax increases and ensures the continuation of all STAR and enhanced STAR benefits.

To help with closing costs and down payments for low- and moderate-income first-time homebuyers, the budget includes \$25 million for the new First-Time Homeowner program. We also help SNAP recipients purchase more fruits and vegetables with \$2 million for the Double Up Food Bucks program.

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Did you know...

there are federal tax breaks, tax credits, and rebates that could save you thousands on energy-efficient home renovations, appliances, and vehicles purchased this year?

Visit <https://www.irs.gov/pub/taxpros/fs-2022-40.pdf> to find out more!

