



May 9, 2024

Greetings –

Last night the Legislature approved the State’s \$254.3 billion budget for the 2025-26 Fiscal Year. The Enacted Budget contains critical investments that touch on every aspect of New Yorker’s lives. As Chair of the Committee on Libraries and Education Technology, I am especially proud of the funding secured for our libraries throughout the State including very significant funding for libraries in Brooklyn. Below are some aspects of the budget and initiatives that I especially want to highlight.

Critical Investments in Libraries Statewide and a Big Win for Brooklyn Libraries

Libraries are among our most vital and democratic civic institutions. At a time when the federal government is cutting funds for libraries and cultural organizations, the Enacted Budget correctly increases funding for libraries to help ensure they can fulfill their mission as centers of learning and community engagement. Especially noteworthy is **\$13.2 million for the Brooklyn Public Library for repairs and upgrades to branch libraries** including roof repairs, enhancing patron experience through HVAC upgrades and elevator and accessibility upgrades. I also advocated strongly for and secured **\$100,000 in operating funds for BPL’s Center for Brooklyn History** (formerly the Brooklyn Historical Society). In terms of Statewide funding for libraries the Enacted Budget includes \$44 million for Library Construction Costs - \$10 million above the Governor’s proposal, and \$106 million for operating costs - \$1.7 above the Governor’s proposal.

Housing, Childcare, and Mental Health

The Enacted Budget includes several significant actions when it comes to housing, childcare, and mental health. It includes **\$50 million to launch the Housing Access Voucher Program**, rental assistance for individuals and families at risk of homelessness – a good start, although much more is needed. Robust funding of \$2.2 billion was allocated for childcare subsidies, including \$400 million to ensure that localities have the resources to keep childcare subsidy enrollment open and enhancement of the Empire Child Tax Credit by increasing the maximum credit to \$1,000 for children under four years old. The budget also included critical **mental health provisions, including \$8 million for Daniel’s Law inspired pilot programs**, so communities can develop and implement behavioral health crisis response systems to respond to individuals in crisis.

Education: Record Funding for Schools and Universal Free School Meals

The Enacted Budget includes record funding of \$37.6 billion for schools statewide including \$26.4 billion in Foundation Aid, a \$1.4 billion increase from last year with at least a 2% increase for every school district. While New York City schools will see an increase in funding compared to last year, I am very concerned that changes in the Foundation Aid formula overall worked against New York City. With federal funding for education on the chopping block, we are going to have to re-evaluate how to best meet the needs of our schools and re-consideration of the Foundation Aid formula may need to be part of this. One good accomplishment in this budget, is the allocation of **\$340 million in total for schools for universal free breakfast and lunch for students statewide.**

Funding Secured for “Start-Up” of State Center on Dyslexia and Dysgraphia

I am proud to have secured \$250,000 for start-up costs related to the establishment of a State Center on Dyslexia and Dysgraphia. This Center was among the recommendations in of the New York State Task Force on Dyslexia and Dysgraphia, established pursuant to my legislation. The establishment of this Center will help ensure that the State is following best practices for screenings, interventions, and professional development, data collection, and public awareness regarding dyslexia and dysgraphia. While this allocation is a modest start it provides impetus for the passage of my bill [A.2687](#), which would enshrine the Center in law and lay the groundwork for full funding.

Investments in Environmental Sustainability

The Enacted Budget includes \$1 billion for the Sustainable Futures Program to fund emissions reduction and other climate change mitigation projects across the state. The budget also continues the allocation of \$500 million to support New York’s clean water infrastructure programs under the Clean Water Infrastructure Act. Additionally, the Enacted Budget includes \$425 million for the Environmental Protection Fund for environmental preservation and open space projects, an increase of \$25 million over the Governor’s proposal.

Of course, in a budget of this size and complexity there is much more to unpack and these highlights represent only a sampling of initiatives that I believe to be especially noteworthy. If the extensive federal budget cuts proposed by the Trump Administration come to pass, the Legislature and Governor may very well have to return to the budget later this year to ensure New York State’s budget is one that meets the needs of the moment. I will continue to advocate for good and fair budget policy grounded in the belief that our government can truly serve the public interest and we can achieve a more sustainable, more equitable, and more livable New York.

If you have any concerns about any legislative or community issue, please email me at carrollr@nyassembly.gov or call (718) 788-7221.

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