



April 22, 2024

Greetings –

Over the weekend the Legislature approved the State budget totaling \$237 billion for the 2024-25 Fiscal Year. There is much to unpack in a budget of this size and complexity, but I want to highlight some of the most noteworthy aspects. Among the measures that I am glad to see included are:

- Significant support for the Brooklyn Museum
- The passage of Sammy's Law enabling lower speed limits in NYC
- Significant increases in education funding to a record \$35.9 billion in school aid statewide
- \$2.4 billion in funding to address the migrant crisis – a \$500 million increase from last year
- Support for SUNY Downstate Hospital to prevent its closure
- Standards for and investments in evidence-based literacy education for grades K-3
- Incentives for housing production with affordable units and protections for tenants in unregulated apartments
- First in the nation mandatory leave for pre-natal care
- The elimination of co-pays for insulin prescriptions
- The establishment of a dedicated fund to expand and ensure abortion access
- Expansion of eligibility for the Tuition Assistance Program and an additional \$100 million for SUNY and CUNY
- New law enforcement tools making it easier to shut down unlicensed cannabis shops
- Funding to the MTA to improve service on 7 express routes and 13 local routes spanning all five boroughs as part of the Assembly's efforts to improve public transportation in tandem with the implementation of congestion pricing.

Below is some elaboration on selected highlights:

Big Win for Brooklyn: \$10 million to support the Brooklyn Museum

This year's budget includes \$10 million for capital improvements to the Brooklyn Museum. After meeting with Director Anne Pasternak last summer, it became clear to me that we needed to think big and I am proud to have led the effort in the Assembly to secure these funds for the Museum. The Brooklyn Museum is, of course, a major cultural institution, but is also an important center of civic life in Brooklyn and provides educational programming for thousands of school children throughout the borough. This State funding will contribute to a new African Art Gallery, a new American and Contemporary Art Gallery, a new education wing, and essential infrastructure improvements such as new HVAC system. These investments will not only enhance visitor experience but also help the Museum in terms of securing loans of artwork and donations of collections.



With Director Anne Pasternak in the Brooklyn Museum Lobby

Big Win for Street Safety: Sammy's Law

This year's budget finally includes Sammy's Law, which I co-sponsored and have long advocated for. This legislation will save lives and reduce accidents by giving New York City the authority to lower the current citywide speed limit from 25 mph to 20 mph. Its passage marks the culmination of years of work on the part of Families for Safe Streets and other organizations. Families for Safe Streets is led by people who courageously shared their stories about losing family members to traffic violence, including our Park Slope neighbor Amy Cohen, mother of Sammy, for whom the bill was named. I believe we owe a debt of gratitude to those who turned tragedy into positive change and look forward to continuing to work with all who want our streets to be as safe as possible.



With Amy Cohen, Families for Safe Streets, and legislative colleagues

Education: Record Funding and Progress on Literacy

The budget increases funding for K - 12 by \$1.3 billion over last year for a total of \$35.9 billion statewide. The legislature successfully pushed back against the Governor's proposal to immediately revise the Foundation Aid formula that would have resulted in school districts losing funding.

The budget includes elements of my Right to Read Bill ([A.2897](#)) including the requirement that the State set standards for early literacy following evidence-based practices as well as \$10 million for teaching training and \$1 million for a

micro-credentialing program on such best practices. The budget also includes \$150,000 to support the implementation of my Dyslexia Task Force Act ([A.133](#)) and \$250,000 for the Promise Project, which provides dyslexia evaluation and intervention services for underserved communities in New York City. While I am very proud of this progress, I still believe there is a need for more thoroughgoing legislation that will systemically overhaul the State's current approach, which is leaving far too many students behind.

Housing: Progress on Housing Production and Expanding Tenant Protections

This year the budget includes tax incentives for the development of new housing in New York City with affordable units and a tax incentive program for New York City office to housing conversions with affordable units. Outside of New York City, localities can opt-in to a tax incentive program for new development or residential conversion projects also including affordability requirements, but to truly address the State's housing crisis suburbs should be required to shoulder their fair share of new development.

The new incentive programs include strong labor provisions and the budget also included a provision requiring the audit of housing built under the expired 421-a program to ensure compliance with affordable housing requirements. The budget also allocates \$500 million to develop units on State owned land. Ideally, we would have robust federal and state housing production programs but as things stand the private market is still the driver of new construction.

In addition to the production related measures, the budget extends tenant protections to a significant number of apartments not currently under rent stabilization laws. For covered apartments, it would be more difficult for landlords to arbitrarily evict tenants, not offer renewal leases, or unreasonably increase rents well beyond the rate of inflation.

Healthcare: Protecting Downstate and Strengthening Safety Net Care

The Legislature successfully pushed back on the Governor's plan to close SUNY Downstate Hospital. The budget includes \$100 million to keep the hospital running for the next year, \$300 million in capital funds for improvements to the hospital, and legislation that would establish a community advisory board to study and make recommendations for the long-term viability of Downstate's healthcare and medical education mission.

The budget also includes \$800 million in funding for financially distressed and safety-net hospitals, \$350 million for rate increases for hospitals and nursing homes, and provides that children ages 0-6 remain continuously enrolled in Medicaid or Child Health Plus regardless of changes in family income.

Still Much to Be Done

While overall I am proud of what was accomplished in this budget, like every year there were difficult compromises and some issues of great importance were not addressed such as ending subsidies for gas infrastructure as called for by the HEAT Act. I will continue to work with my colleagues to find a path forward on this and many issues as we strive to create a more equitable and sustainable State.

DISTRICT OFFICE
416 7th Ave
Brooklyn, NY 11215
(718) 788-7221

ALBANY OFFICE
LOB 557
Albany, NY 12248
(518) 455-5377

Assemblymember Robert Carroll | carrollr@nyassembly.gov