

NEWS FROM

Carl E. Heastie Speaker



“I was able to negotiate a strong minimum wage for our families with the Governor and the Senate. I want to thank all of the advocates who stood with me and helped us achieve this monumental victory.”

– Speaker Carl E. Heastie

Dear Neighbor,

This year's budget represents an historic victory for the working families of New York State. My negotiations with the Senate and Executive were very difficult, but I can say that we were able to achieve a landmark agreement that provides a path to success for our entire state. I am very proud of the progress the Assembly Majority and I were able to make in advancing the interests of working men and women.

Since I was first elected Speaker of the Assembly, I have said that raising the minimum wage is the Assembly Majority's number one priority. Through hard-fought negotiations, I was able to achieve that goal and many other priorities.

In addition to the minimum wage, we passed a sound budget that invests in education at historic levels while keeping spending under control. We were able to pass a paid family leave program, fight off cost shifts to New York City and implement a middle-class tax break. This year's comprehensive budget prioritizes education for our children from pre-K to college and takes an important step toward ensuring that higher education is available for all, regardless of income.

It is through your support that we were able to pass such a progressive and fair budget. The voices of New Yorkers throughout the state were heard and we were able to invest in the types of programs that truly matter to Bronx families.

There is still much work to be done. I pledge to you that I will continue to do all that I can to bring necessary resources to continue the improvement of our community. As always, if there is any way that I can be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me. My office is here to serve you.

With Love and Hope,

Carl E. Heastie
Speaker



Members from the UNITE Here labor union meet Speaker Heastie to discuss the minimum wage

Speaker Carl E. Heastie negotiated \$15 minimum wage for New Yorkers

From the very first day of this session, the Assembly Majority promised New Yorkers that they would do everything possible to deliver a fairer minimum wage. The Assembly is more than proud to announce that this year's 2016-17 budget marks a monumental point in New York legislative history. More than 2.3 million hardworking employees will be affected by an increase in the minimum wage. The minimum wage increase reflects the disparate costs of living and economic realities in various regions of the state. As a result, there will be different phase-in periods for upstate and downstate communities. In New York City, the minimum wage will increase to \$11 at the end of 2016, followed by \$2 increases each year after, reaching \$15 an hour on Dec. 31, 2018. For New York City businesses with 10 or fewer employees, the minimum wage will increase to \$10.50 at the end of 2016, followed by \$1.50 increases each of the following years and reach \$15 on Dec. 31, 2019.

For Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester counties the minimum wage will increase to \$15 by the end of 2021.

And in upstate communities, the wage will increase \$0.70 each year and reach \$12.50 by the end of 2020. The minimum wage will then potentially be increased to \$15 according to an indexed schedule set by the Division of Budget and the Department of Labor.

For tipped workers, the budget pegs their wage at two-thirds of the minimum wage rounded either to the nearest five cents or to \$7.50, whichever is higher.

Speaker Heastie secures landmark funding for education in 2016-17 state budget

The budget provides a record \$24.8 billion in school aid, to help ensure all New York State schools are fairly funded and have the resources they need to provide a quality education.

Speaker Heastie funds Foundation Aid at record high

The budget increases Foundation Aid by \$627 million, which is directed to help our most vulnerable schools through a needs-based formula. This is a victory for every child, parent and taxpayer in New York State.

Speaker Heastie funds My Brother's Keeper at \$20 million

The federal My Brother's Keeper initiative was established by President Obama to address the enduring opportunity gaps faced by minority males. New York is the first state in the nation to implement My Brother's Keeper because of Speaker Heastie's advocacy. To carry out the goals of this initiative, the budget provides \$20 million to implement the Board of Regents' recommendations from its Workgroup to Improve Outcomes for Boys and Young Men of Color.

Community schools awarded \$175 million

Speaker Heastie was also able to negotiate \$175 million to address poverty in our communities through community schools designed to help children learn in spite of the challenges that accompany poverty. Additionally, the Assembly has allocated a significant portion of the budget toward transforming and improving performance in failing schools.

Speaker Carl Heastie fights off cuts to higher education

During budget negotiations with the Senate and Assembly, Speaker Heastie fought off a \$485 million cost shift to CUNY. This funding has traditionally been paid by the state to help maintain the quality of education and programs offered by CUNY schools. The governor proposed shifting these costs to New York City but the Assembly Majority refused to accept this proposal.

"The city of New York should not be forced to unfairly foot the bill for state costs," noted Speaker Heastie. "The Majority conference was united in our defense of New York City and together we prevailed."

Councilman Andy King, Carl Heastie, Beatrice Castiglia-Catullo, Jamaal Bailey and Dr. Anderson Torres honor Speaker Heastie with the “EAST Award” for Excellence in Service



Speaker Heastie secures funding to make sure higher education is accessible

The 2016-17 budget ensures that tuition at SUNY and CUNY schools will not be raised during the coming academic year, because every New Yorker has the right to receive an affordable college education. The budget also provides an increase of \$30 million in operating funds for SUNY and CUNY.

“A college degree should not be a luxury – it’s something every student in this state should have access to,” Speaker Heastie said. “We strongly invested in our higher education system to ensure all New Yorkers have the chance to earn a college degree and the success that can come with it.”

“The Assembly Majority has always believed that investing in our children’s academic success is the best investment we can make for the future of New York’s families and communities. This year, we strengthened our promise to ensure that an affordable college education is within reach for every student and family in our state,” said Speaker Heastie.

Strengthening college opportunity programs

The budget provides over \$1 billion for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), while freezing tuition for all CUNY and SUNY schools for the upcoming year. An additional \$20 million for community colleges means even more students will have a chance at higher education.

Higher education should be the best choice for success, and this budget has made great strides to ensure that young adults aren’t indebted by their education. The budget also provides a 20 percent increase over last year, for a total of \$23.8 million, for the following opportunity programs:

- **Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP):** \$35.5 million, an increase of \$5.9 million;
- **Educational Opportunity Program (EOP):** \$32.2 million, an increase of \$5.4 million;
- **Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge program (SEEK):** \$28.1 million, an increase of \$4.7 million;
- **Liberty Partnerships:** \$18.4 million, an increase of \$3.1 million;
- **Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP):** \$15.8 million, an increase of \$2.6 million;
- **Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP):** \$11.9 million, an increase of \$1.9 million; and
- **College Discovery Program:** \$1.3 million, an increase of \$225,000.

Additionally, the budget allocates \$3 million for the Foster Youth College Success Initiative – an increase of \$1.5 million – to help these students overcome the challenges associated with being a part of the foster care system and to support them throughout their college careers.

Speaker Heastie secures \$600,000 to run anti-gun violence program in the Bronx

During budget negotiations, Speaker Heastie was able to secure \$600,000 to implement Operation SNUG (GUNS spelled backward). This mentorship program has been very successful throughout New York City. Former gang members serve as mentors for local youth by teaching alternatives to gangs and violence. This program is administered by the New York City Mission Society and has helped many neighborhoods reduce gun violence and gang warfare.

Budget includes \$950 million for Second Avenue Subway as part of MTA capital plan

The budget will provide \$7.3 billion for the MTA’s 2015-19 capital plan over four years. It will fund improvements to the authority’s transportation infrastructure, which includes the purchase of new buses, subway and train cars, transit station improvements and modern signal systems.

The Assembly successfully pushed for \$950 million in additional funding for the MTA’s Second Avenue Subway project, including \$500 million in the MTA’s 2015-19 capital plan. This project will alleviate crowding on the Lexington Avenue Subway line. This project will receive Capital Program Review Board approval of another \$450 million for the authority’s next capital plan in order to extend subway service to New York City’s East Harlem area.



Speaker Heastie meets with youth from the Bronx to discuss education funding

Cutting taxes for middle-class families

In order to provide additional assistance to working and middle-income families, the budget will cut personal income taxes by \$270 million in 2018 compared to 2017 tax rates. These tax savings will increase to approximately \$3 billion by 2025 when the middle-class tax rate reductions are fully phased in. The cuts would incrementally reduce the middle-class tax rates for single filers earning between \$13,000 and \$200,000, heads of households earning between \$19,500 and \$250,000, and married couples earning between \$26,000 and \$300,000. Tax rates for brackets in these ranges would decrease from the current 5.9 percent, 6.45 percent and 6.65 percent to 5.5 percent, 5.5 percent and 6.0 percent respectively, over eight years. These new tax cuts will benefit up to 6 million New Yorkers.

Speaker Heastie allocates additional funding for child care and Advantage Afterschool programs

The budget includes \$24.9 million for various child care opportunities. It allocates \$10.6 million for facilitated enrollment, which provides 12 months of child care subsidies for working and middle-income families who meet employment and income requirements. The facilitated enrollment allotment includes \$6.2 million for New York City and restores \$2.6 million for upstate communities. The final budget also includes \$5 million for Advantage Afterschool, which offers extracurricular activities for students in a positive environment.

Carl Heastie secures \$2.55 million for NYCHA improvements

Speaker Heastie was able to allocate \$2.55 million in funding from the 2015 state budget that will be used to improve common areas for projects throughout the Northeast Bronx. Funding includes:

- \$1 million for security and lighting for the building and grounds at Edenwald Housing Development;
- \$550,000 for external and internal doors for Baychester Housing Development;
- \$500,000 for security and lighting for the building and grounds at Boston Secor Housing Development; and
- \$500,000 for lobby and common area doors for Baychester Housing Development.

State budget provides housing assistance for elderly

This year's budget helps more elderly New Yorkers remain in their homes and continue to be a part of our communities and ensures they receive the best possible care.

The 2016-17 state budget restores \$951,000 for Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) and Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NNORC) programs, and provides an additional \$700,000. NORCs and NNORCs allow seniors to remain in their homes and communities by providing support services that include health monitoring and case management, as well as social activities to foster engagement. Current contracts are protected until Dec. 31, 2017, with important updates to the programs taking effect Jan. 1, 2018.

Speaker Heastie announces anti-poverty initiative in the Bronx

As part of the state budget, Carl Heastie was able to secure up to \$2,750,000 to fund the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative in the Bronx. The budget allocated \$25 million to reduce poverty based on a per person ratio and the Bronx has some of the highest need in the state. These funds will be used to formulate and implement a focused plan to combat poverty in high-need neighborhoods.

News from



Carl E. Heastie
Speaker

2016-17 budget includes victory on paid family leave

"No New Yorker should have to choose between collecting a paycheck and taking care of a loved one," Speaker Heastie said. "Paid family leave will ensure that workers can take time off to care for a newborn or sick relative without having to sacrifice their financial security. The Assembly Majority has been passing this legislation for years, and we are finally able to see the fruit of many years of advocacy."

The budget includes a paid family leave provision that, when fully phased in, will afford employees 12 weeks of paid leave per year to care for a new child or family member in need. The measure will be funded through a small weekly employee contribution and offer up to two-thirds of an employee's salary during their absence, not to exceed two-thirds of the statewide average weekly wage. The policy will be implemented at a gradual rate, starting in 2018 with 8 weeks of paid leave offered at 50 percent of weekly income; in 2019, the benefit will increase to 10 weeks, and in 2021, employees will be able to take 12 weeks of paid leave at the full two-thirds of weekly pay. Workers will be eligible for the program after six months of employment.