



Dear Friends,

This week the NYS Legislature adopted, and the Governor signed, the 2023-24 New York State budget for the period April 1, 2023 through March 31, 2023. While this year's budget was unfortunately over a month late, unlike the federal budget process, the state during this period was not on the precipice of a shutdown. Obligations were met through "extenders," legislation that extended the 2022-23 NYS budget to cover this period.

The New York State budget is markedly different than the budgets of many other governmental bodies in that there is a heavy component of policy contained in it. The Governor has the authority under the NYS constitution to include in the budget legislative policy proposals, even if they do not relate to her proposed budget. The Governor's proposed budget this year contained substantial, controversial policy proposals – many more than in recent years. These included the Housing Compact, which I have [reported on](#) at length in previous newsletters, proposed changes in bail, charter school licensure, and environmental measures (such as "Cap & Invest" and the all-electric building act).

The adoption of the \$229 billion budget entailed long and complex meetings of the leadership (comprised of the Governor, the Majority Leader of the State Senate, and the Speaker of the Assembly) and continuous consultation with members of the Legislature through conferences of the majority members (Democrats) and minority members (Republicans). This dialogue ensured that there was sufficient support from the Legislature to adopt the budget – albeit not unanimously.



Click above or [here](#) for the brief remarks on the Assembly floor yesterday during Tuesday's budget debate

2023-24 Budget Highlights

Despite the delay, the adopted budget is a good one. A budget is a document that provides for the operation of the government, its programs, and its grants to localities and other entities. But it also is a statement of values. **This budget provides well for the people of our state, and of my district, and does so both with compassion and fiscally sound principles.**

Here are some of the highlights:

Housing

As many of you know, the Governor submitted an ambitious housing plan, The Housing Compact, calling for the creation of 800,000 residential housing units within 10 years. However, to reach that goal, the plan placed the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of every city, town, and village in the state by mandating the adoption of far-reaching local laws, overriding local zoning.

I was among those suburban legislators who [opposed the plan](#), but I was both disappointed and surprised that the Executive did not pursue with the Legislature a workable compromise that would have changed a mandated program to one based on incentives. I will be introducing legislation soon that I am hopeful will resume the conversation with an eye toward creating housing, particularly affordable housing.

In terms of what the budget *did* include, I was pleased that it does make important investments in housing including:

- **\$391 million** for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program;
- **\$50 million** for a Homeowner Stabilization Fund to finance home repairs in 10 communities across the state that have been identified as having high levels of low-income homeowners of color and homeowner distress; and
- **\$40 million** for the Homeowner Protection Program, which provides funding to dozens of nonprofit housing counseling and legal services organizations around the state to help homeowners in default and foreclosure.

Public Safety & Bail Reform

The budget includes measures to bolster public safety, **including \$347 million in evidence-based gun violence prevention initiatives, \$92 million in aid for prosecution and defense funding, and \$66 million to increase the number of State Police Academy classes.** The state will also direct funding to ramp up enforcement actions against illegal cannabis shops.

The budget also includes **\$30 million to support critical services for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) New Yorkers, including funds to combat bias crimes.**

In regards to the bail reform, the law was amended to give judges greater discretion under certain circumstances; however, the final language reaffirms the underlying principle that the purpose of bail is to ensure the attendance of defendants at trial.

Public Education

The budget provides record funding for public education, fulfilling the promise to fully fund Foundation Aid – the principal support for public schools. The budget includes \$34.5 billion in total School Aid, an increase of \$3 billion, or 9.4 percent over the 2022-23 school year. Twenty-two of the state’s “zombie charters” (those with lapsed licenses) were reactivated, 14 of which are within New York City.

In regards to higher education, the plan includes \$1.38 billion in SUNY operating funds, which is \$178 million over SFY 2022-23, and \$821.4 million in CUNY operating funds, which is an increase of \$103 million over SFY 2022-23. **The budget also staves off an increase in tuition for New York State residents attending SUNY and CUNY schools.**

State, Local Roads, and Public Transportation

The budget funds the second year of the five-year NYS Department of Transportation capital plan at **\$5.5 billion for roads, bridges, rail, aviation, and non-MTA transit systems.** This includes an additional \$100 million for local road capital, \$60 million of which is allocated for the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPs), and \$40 million for the State Touring Routes program.

I am delighted that the budget [includes funds](#) to carry out a corridor study for Route 35 to assess road conditions and estimate project costs for repaving. Anyone who drives Route 35 is painfully aware that it is in dire need of attention. This is the first critical step to secure much-needed funding. My thanks to Senator Pete Harckham for leading this effort, which I strongly and vocally supported in the Assembly.

Though ridership has been inching up for the MTA, it is still well below pre-pandemic levels, resulting in gaping budget needs. The budget supports the financial stability of the MTA by adjusting the Payroll Mobility Tax for the largest New York City businesses to 0.6 percent, which will generate approximately \$1.1 billion. The budget also includes \$300 million in one-time state aid for the MTA; a requirement that New York City contributes \$165 million for paratransit services; \$65 million to reduce from 5.5 percent to 4 percent a proposed MTA fare increase; and \$35 million to expand subway service frequency enhancements.

The Environment

Channeling both state and federal funds, **the budget makes a significant investment in combatting the climate crisis, expanding and hardening the grid, and moving toward fulfilling the goals of the landmark Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act,** the most ambitious climate plan in the nation.

\$400 million was allocated to the Environmental Protection Fund and \$500 million for clean water infrastructure funding. In a significant advance, the New York Power Authority (NYPA) is given the authority to develop renewable energy projects. The budget incorporates a reasonable timeline for transitioning from natural gas to electricity in new building construction. It does not require swapping out gas for electricity in existing buildings, nor does it ban your gas grill.

Minimum Wage

Following a substantial post-pandemic jump in inflation, the budget provides scheduled increases to the minimum wage. In New York City and the counties of Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester, the minimum wage will be \$16.00 on and after January 1, 2024, \$16.50 on and after January 1, 2025, and \$17.00 on and after January 1, 2026. In the remainder of the state, the minimum wage will be \$15.00 on and after January 1, 2024, \$15.50 on and after January 1, 2025, and \$16.00 on and after January 1, 2026.

Beginning on January 1, 2027, these wages will be annually indexed to inflation.

While I am pleased the budget indexes the minimum wage to inflation, I had advocated for a higher starting level given the current level of inflation. **Moving forward, I will continue to push for a higher minimum wage, so people do not need to work more than one full-time job just to put a roof over their heads and food on the table.**

Health Care & Human Services

The budget provides \$1 billion for mental health programs; \$500 million for financially distressed and Safety Net hospitals; significant increases in Medicaid reimbursement rates for outpatient hospital care, as well as nursing home and assisted living programs; and **\$8.3 million to strengthen New York's reproductive health system.**

The budget also provides \$324 million to increase the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) by 4% for human services providers, including mental hygiene agency workers, foster care workers, and elder care workers; \$53 million to increase home health care workers' wages by \$1.55 per hour beginning January 2024, and indexing wages with inflation in the following years.

With a critical shortage of health care workers, many of whom seek employment elsewhere for higher wages, I was disappointed that the requested 8.5% Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for home health care workers did not make it over the finish line. There are many people, especially those with disabilities, who rely on these workers to help with their daily needs. The workers and those they care for have been pleading for this increase in pay to bring more stability to their lives. **I will continue to fight for this increase.**

Childcare

The budget makes childcare more affordable for New York families by providing funding to expand State Child Care program eligibility to families earning up to 85 percent of the state median income. The budget also includes funding for Facilitated Enrollment programs to expand eligibility to families earning up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level for families who are otherwise ineligible for the state childcare program.

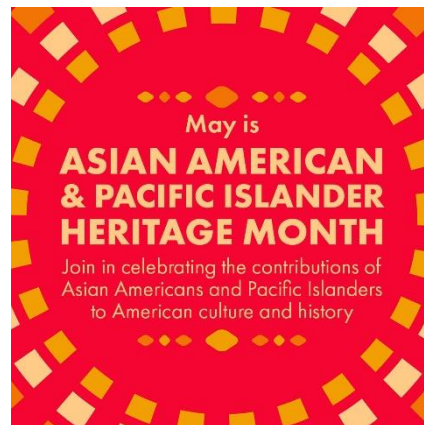
Legal Services for Veterans

Following a budget request that I spearheaded, I was pleased that **\$180,000 was again allocated to Legal Services of the Hudson Valley**, allowing LSHV to continue its services for veterans in Westchester.

Celebrating AAPI Heritage Month

May is Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month. In Westchester County, our AAPI population is growing and this year, David Imamura was elected and [sworn in](#) as the first Asian American member of the Westchester County Board of Legislators. That's progress.

However, the AAPI community still faces so much discrimination and hate, and too many people still do not know about its history in this country. **We need to continue to acknowledge, educate, and celebrate that history, as well as the innumerable achievements and cultural contributions of this very diverse community.**



Thank you, Izzy!

Our very first intern, Izzy Sampere, is graduating from high school and heading off to Vanderbilt in the fall. She first contacted me less than two weeks after I first took office and has been interning with us ever since. From the very beginning, she has been extremely helpful to our entire office. She's smart, hard-working, and a joy to be around.

Thank you, Izzy! We will miss you and we wish you all the best.



A Note from Attorney General James re: Protecting Personal Data

News from New York State Attorney General Letitia James

May Highlights: Protecting Personal Data

Attorney General Letitia James released a Data Security Guide to help businesses better protect consumers' personal data. Last year, the Office of the New York State Attorney General (OAG) received 4,000 data breach notifications, in which it was informed that consumers' personal information may have been compromised. The OAG opened dozens of investigations and penalized companies millions of dollars for their failure to adopt reasonable safeguards to protect customer information or properly inform customers of the incident.

A common target for cybercriminals is social security numbers, and there were 1,876 data breach incidents reported to the OAG last year involving social security numbers. These reported incidents affected over 3.2 million New Yorkers. With social security numbers, a cybercriminal can open financial accounts in the victim's name and collect federal and state benefits.

The Attorney General's Guide discusses some of the data security failures found in recent data security investigations and recommends practices businesses should adopt to better secure their systems, fortify their networks, and strengthen data security measures. Some of the tips from the guide include:

- » Maintain controls for secure authentication procedures, such as multi-factor authentication;
- » Encrypt sensitive customer information, such as social security numbers;
- » Know where consumer information is kept - maintain an asset inventory that tracks where customer information is stored; and
- » Notify consumers quickly and accurately of a data breach so that they can take steps to protect themselves.

In a related action, Attorney General James is working with the State Legislature to regulate health data tracking by various on-line companies and apps.

To read a copy of the Data Security Guide ("Protecting Consumers' Personal Information") visit ag.ny.gov/protecting-data



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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Burdick". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

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