



ASSEMBLYMEMBER
CHRIS BURDICK
ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 93



Dear Friends,

Happy February! I hope you all had a wonderful start to the New Year. **I am pleased to share my first newsletter of 2026, following the start of the new legislative session last month.** We welcomed encouraging news for the New York economy and the state's fiscal position.

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[The FY2027 Budget Process Begins](#)

On January 13, Governor Kathy Hochul delivered her State of the State address, which broadly set out her agenda for the coming year. One week later, on January 20, she released her proposed state budget for fiscal year 2027 (FY2027), which runs from April 1, 2026, through March 31, 2027.

Only a few months ago, deep cuts in funding from the federal government, in particular for Medicaid, were projected to create a gaping budget gap of \$4.2 billion. Fortunately, the New York State economy – particularly a booming stock market – defied those projections, bringing significantly higher revenues. **I am happy to report that the state is in a strong fiscal position.**

Here are the highlights of the Governor's proposed budget, also known as the Executive Budget:

Financial Plan

The Governor proposed \$260 billion in spending, an increase of \$1.6 billion or 0.7%, compared to the revised estimate for the current 2026 fiscal year. The State's Reserve – both discretionary reserves and the statutory Rainy Day Reserves – now total \$14.6 billion. **The Governor renewed her commitment to not increase personal income tax rates, with middle-class tax rates at their lowest level in 70 years.** The proposed budget would extend the 7.25% top corporate tax rate for three years through tax year 2029.

Universal Childcare

One of my long-held goals for our state is to provide universal childcare. I am delighted that the proposed budget would launch a multiyear plan to do so. The childcare proposals include additional funding for existing subsidies and a statewide expansion of Universal Pre-K.

School Aid

Of significant importance to my district is state aid for our public schools. Joining my colleagues in the Assembly, we have continued to press for the full funding of the cornerstone of this aid, Foundation Aid. The State completed its three-year phase-in for fully funding Foundation Aid in School Year 2024.

The proposed budget provides a \$779 million (3%) increase in Foundation Aid, to ensure that each school district receives at least a one percent year-to-year increase.

Medicaid

Medicaid, financed jointly by federal, state, and local governments, provides health and long-term care coverage to lower-income children, pregnant women, adults, seniors, and people with disabilities. Over 6.8 million New Yorkers (34%) are currently covered by Medicaid. **The proposed budget provides an 11.4% increase in Medicaid, partly to offset the reduction in federal support.**

The Environment

I am pleased that the Governor's proposal adds a five-year, \$3.75 billion commitment to support clean water infrastructure, helping to fund municipal drinking water systems, filtration systems, and wastewater treatment. The budget would continue the five-year funding program for the Environmental Protection Fund of \$425 million per year.

It should be noted that in last year's budget negotiations, I joined with my colleagues to push for increased environmental funding levels to help address the severe infrastructure needs for water quality and wastewater projects in my district. **I will do so again this year.**

Higher Education

The proposed budget provides a **\$244 million increase in funding for SUNY and CUNY** schools. This funding will allow for no tuition increases for New York residents, additional funding for tuition grants, funds for employee benefits, and general operating support.

Additionally, the proposal would provide **\$1.3 billion in new capital funding** for the SUNY and CUNY systems.

Housing

The proposed budget provides \$25 billion for the final year of a five-year housing plan to create and preserve 100,000 affordable homes (including 10,000 units with support services for vulnerable populations). In addition, \$250 million would be allocated to the new construction of affordable housing units.

Transportation

The Executive Budget provides more than \$6 billion for the last year of a record \$34.4 billion, five-year Department of Transportation (DOT) Capital Plan. **It is not enough.**

Many of the state roads that run across my district are badly in need of repaving. I have been pressing for increased funding since my arrival in the Assembly.

Last year, working with my colleagues in the state legislature from Westchester and across the state, we successfully advocated for an \$800 million increase in capital funding to offset the inflationary increases in scheduled projects. **An infusion of capital of at least that magnitude is needed again this year** to allow new projects to be added to DOT's schedule.

Reforms in the Public Service Law

The Governor's budget includes several proposed amendments to the Public Service Law, with the view towards providing more affordable utility rates. These proposals include:

- Tying executive pay to affordability by requiring the disclosure of CEO salaries compared to the average worker's pay;
- Benchmarking executive compensation against customer affordability benchmarks;
- Requiring utilities filing for increases to present a budget-constrained option that keeps their operating and capital costs below the rate of inflation;
- Disallowing utilities from including in their rates the costs of corporate advertising, fines, and certain legal fees.

I applaud the Governor for these steps, however, as discussed in my update below on the Con Edison and NYSEG rate cases, the rate-setting system needs significantly more reform than she has outlined. As a result, I will be working with my colleagues in the Legislature to try to secure greater utility reform than what she has proposed

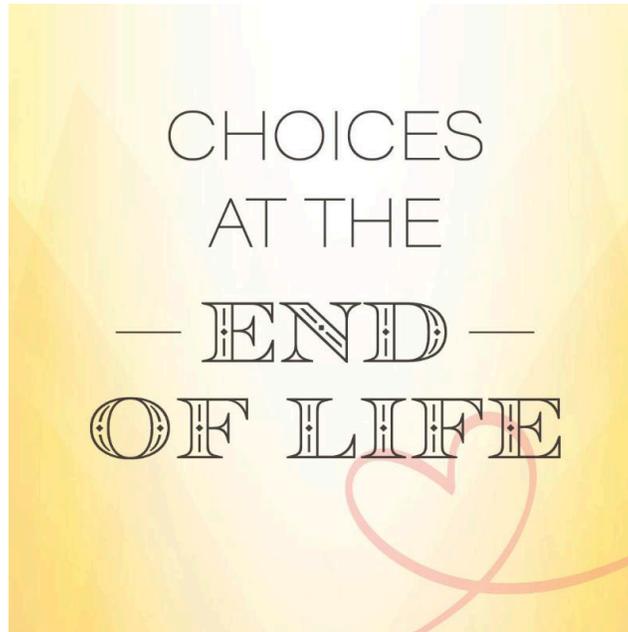
My thanks to everyone who participated in last week's [annual virtual budget forum](#).

Please note that as the budget process moves forward, you are welcome to contact my office to share any questions or concerns you might have.



Medical Aid in Dying to Become Law

I am pleased to report that the Medical Aid in Dying Act ([A.136/A.9515](#)) will be **signed into law** after amendments requested by the Governor to last year's legislation were voted on this past Wednesday. **I was a proud co-sponsor of this bill**, which was spearheaded by my colleagues Assemblywoman Amy Paulin and NYS Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal.



The Medical Aid in Dying Act places New York on the cutting edge of civil liberties and the humane treatment of the terminally ill. While modern medicine has made extraordinary achievements in the preservation and extension of life – along with compassionate care at the end of it – it can only go so far. This legislation affirms the cherished principle that every individual's life belongs to them alone.

The law provides that mentally competent, terminally ill adults may request self-administered medication to end their own lives. **Extensive guardrails were included to ensure that a decision of such magnitude is not taken lightly.** Two physicians must independently verify that a patient has six months or less to live and, alongside a mental health professional, the mental capacity to give informed consent. Patients must record an oral request and submit a written request signed by at least two adult witnesses. Providers will not be held responsible for good-faith assistance in dying or for refusing to participate.

Finally, we have ensured that a patient's insurance coverage, including life and health insurance, will not be affected by their decision of whether or not to use medical aid in dying.

Terminally ill patients deserve a full range of end-of-life options, a decision that many of us will eventually face. This law offers our loved ones, ourselves, and each other the right to death with dignity.

[ConEdison & NYSEG Rate Case Updates](#)

For nearly a year, my staff and I have been immersed in the intricacies of utility rate hike requests filed with the Public Service Commission (PSC), starting with the just-concluded Con Edison rate case and continuing with the rate case filed by New York State Electric & Gas (NYSEG). As readers of my newsletter know, I became an “intervenor” in the cases so that I could submit testimony and interrogatories, and so that I could take part in the process, whether that entailed confidential settlement negotiations or litigation.

Two of my staff members also intervened in the cases.

ConEdison

On January 22, the PSC approved the Joint Proposal (JP), the settlement agreement between the intervenors and Con Edison in the Con Edison rate case

Assemblymembers Dana Levenberg, the Office of MaryJane Shimsky, County Executive Ken Jenkins, and the Westchester Board of Legislators opposed the JP on the basis that it would make already unaffordable rates even more unaffordable.

Together with nearly 80% of the members of the New York City Council (led by our former Assembly colleague Harvey Epstein), **we had urged the PSC to reject the JP and set rates at their present level. Unfortunately, they disagreed.**

The PSC decision to approve the JP sets annual rate increases in the three-year rate plan (2026, 2027 and 2028) at +4.3%, +5.0%, and +3.3% for electricity delivery and -0.3%, +7.2% and +3.7% for gas delivery. The rates would exceed inflation (e.g. the Social Security COLA increase was 2.8%, effective January 1).

While the outcome of the Con Edison case resulted in higher rates than we felt were warranted, third-party observers believe that our participation in the case undoubtedly resulted in lower levels than had we not participated. **We felt that the significant investment of time and resources was necessary to best represent the interests of our constituents and also to learn how the PSC rate-setting system functions.**

What we learned is that the system is opaque and impenetrable and fails to provide a level playing field between the utilities and ratepayers. The Public Service Law (PSL) requires that the PSC achieve a balance between providing utilities sufficient revenues to provide adequate, safe, and reliable service at just and reasonable rates. **Unfortunately, the rate-**

setting system is such that it is skewed in favor of the utilities, resulting in an imbalance.

Our job now is to do what we can to apply what we learned to shape legislation to reform the system.

NYSEG

NYSEG filed its rate increase request with the PSC at the end of June 2025 (Con Ed's case was filed on January 31, 2025), and until recently, it was unclear whether confidential settlement negotiations would go forward. They will not.

Rather than it being resolved in the manner in which the Con Ed case was resolved, the Administrative Law Judges assigned to the case issued a notice that an evidentiary hearing will begin on February 9th and continue as needed.

This hearing will allow cross-examination of each party's pre-filed testimony under oath. An evidentiary hearing is the formal, trial-like proceeding in which sworn testimony and cross-examination create the legal record the PSC must rely on to determine whether a utility's proposed rates and practices are just, reasonable, and supported by evidence under the Public Service Law.

As intervenors, my staff and I will be participating in the hearings. **I will continue to keep you updated.**



It's Tax Season! Some Reminders...

With tax season officially underway, we wanted to make sure you were aware of programs for those who qualify:

Need help preparing your taxes? The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs offer free basic tax return preparation for seniors and other qualifying taxpayers. **For more information or to see if you are eligible for these services, [please click here](#).**

**Tax filing assistance is available
for qualifying New Yorkers!**



Make sure you take advantage of all the tax savings out there! Learn more about the federal [Child Tax Credit](#) and [Earned Income Tax Credit](#).

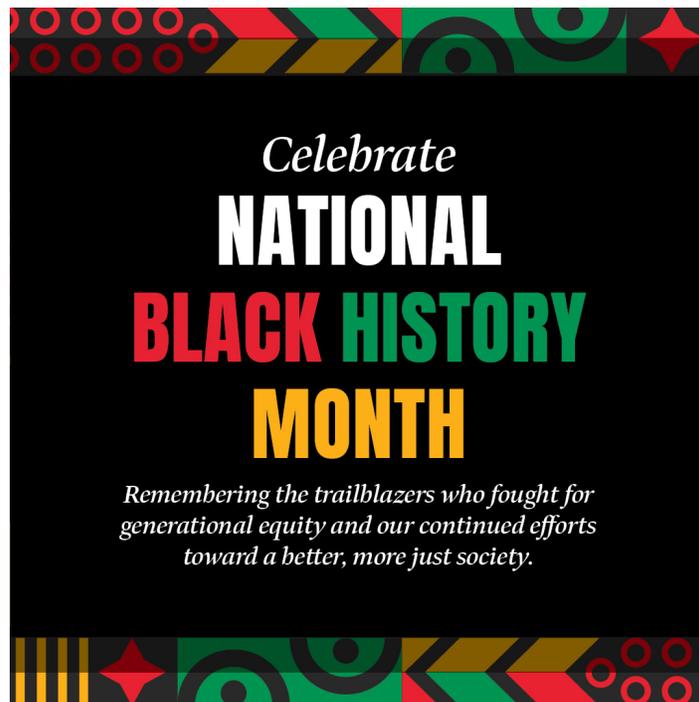


Finally, for those who qualify, **a reminder to claim your enhanced Empire State Child Tax Credit.** The newly expanded credit is available to more families than ever and provides refunds of up to \$1,000 per child under age 4 and up to \$330 per child ages 4-16. [Click here for more details.](#)



Celebrating Black History Month

Finally, **February is Black History Month**, a time to celebrate the central role of Black Americans in our country, and to honor the trailblazers who helped to shape our history



In Westchester County, there are many events taking place this month in honor of Black History Month. ArtsWestchester has compiled a wonderful list, which you can find by [clicking here](#).

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/X](#), and [Instagram](#) for continued up-to-date information.

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Sincerely yours,

Chris Burdick

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