



NEWS FROM

Assemblymember

John T. McDonald III

Dear Neighbor:

As your new representative in the New York State Assembly, I wanted to share with you highlights from this past legislative session including key components of the state budget.

My legislative focus continues to be on supporting education and job creation, improving our fragile health care environment, reducing unfunded mandates, promoting safer neighborhoods and preserving and protecting our natural resources.

As always, my office is available to assist you. If you are having trouble with state or local government issues, please do not hesitate to contact me by calling (518) 455-4474 or by emailing mcdonaldj@assembly.state.ny.us. You can also join my mailing list for community and legislative updates by visiting my Assembly website.

Sincerely,

John T. McDonald III

Assemblymember

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2013 BUDGET UPDATE

My colleagues and I in the New York State Assembly voted on several significant pieces of the state budget that closed a \$1.3 billion gap and marked the state's third consecutive balanced, on-time budget under the leadership of Governor Andrew Cuomo. The state budget provides for more aid to our schools and institutions of higher education, small business tax credits, more aid to our state's health services, provides key investments for job creation and provides tax relief to hardworking middle-class families.

Education

Our communities are only as strong as our schools and that is why I fought to restore funding to our schools that was cut four years ago. This year's budget invests in our children's future by giving our schools nearly one billion dollars in additional education funding. The budget includes \$25 million for full-day and half-day pre-kindergarten grants to allow for more full-day pre-K programs across the state and additional half-day pre-K slots. We made a commitment to higher education by increasing support to \$2,422 per-Full Time Equivalent (FTE) student at SUNY & Hudson Valley Community College. The base aid increase is \$150 per-FTE student, which is the second consecutive increase in community college base aid.



Assemblymember McDonald is pictured with Watervliet students who were awarded scholarships, provided by the Arsenal Business & Technology Partnership, to attend the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering's summer camp programs at the Children's Museum of Science and Technology.

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Library increase

The budget increased funding for public libraries by \$4 million, which is encouraging news given that libraries have been level-funded for the last few years. There are still more steps to climb to get back to the 2007-08 funding levels.



Assemblymember McDonald attends the launch of the Summer Reading Program at the Arbor Hill/West Hill branch of the Albany Public Library.

Historic preservation tax credit

A key provision of the budget was the extension of the New York State Historic Tax Credit, which will cover 20 percent of qualified rehabilitation costs of structures, up to a credit of \$50,000. Programs such as this one are critical for the revival of our urban communities that are rich with history and I am confident that this tax credit will lead to even greater investment in our region. For more information, visit www.nysparks.com/shpo/tax-credit-programs.

Tax incentive to hire veterans

To promote job growth and support those who have heroically served our country find good employment when they complete their military service, we created a tax credit for businesses that hire a post-9/11 military veteran for a new full-time job. At the core of this goal are efforts to connect our service men and women with well compensated jobs and services that will improve their quality of life.



Assemblymember McDonald alongside Congressman Paul Tonko, Colonie Town Supervisor Paula Mahan, Albany County Executive Daniel McCoy, former Congressmen Michael McNulty and Town of Colonie Board Member Daniel Hornick at the Albany County Honor-A-Vet ceremony.

Minimum wage

I am pleased to have supported an increase in the state's minimum wage to \$9.00 per hour by 2016. Raising the minimum wage was the right thing to do for workers and this wage bill was also one that the business community supported after much discussion. The intent is to put more money into the pockets of those most likely to spend it locally, jump-starting consumer spending and helping to spur the economy. Additionally, in order to help struggling families in tough times, the weekly unemployment benefit will gradually increase from \$405 per week to 50 percent of the state's average weekly wage.

START-UP NY

This initiative creates tax-free zones for eligible businesses near SUNY and CUNY campuses – as well as private colleges and universities – to foster job creation. Eligible businesses will have all state taxes waived for 10 years and will need to be aligned with or further the academic mission of the campuses, college or university sponsoring the tax-free community as well as have positive community and economic benefits. The intent is to attract new business to our region, not compete with existing business. This program is a reflection of the competition New York State faces against other states across the country and is an aggressive effort to grow our region, which is a mutual benefit to all.



Assemblymember McDonald tours the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering with other members of the Capital Region Assembly delegation.

Office for People With Developmental Disabilities

In another major accomplishment, I fought, and succeeded, to restore up to \$90 million to the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) in order to help non-profits that work with some of New York's most vulnerable people. Organizations that are funded through OPWDD provide life-changing services for those with developmental disabilities, helping them get the care and compassion they need to live a quality life. Restoring the funding for these OPWDD services is vital.

Mandate relief to local governments and businesses

The 2013-14 Budget provides local governments and businesses with mandate relief reforms. New York State maintains \$715 million in unrestricted aid to local governments, the primary vehicle of which is the Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) program. In addition, the budget provides pension stabilization, an increase in funding to the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Plan (CHIPS), and provides \$107 million to accelerate an enhanced federal match to local Medicaid costs, thereby reducing the local share of Medicaid to counties. For businesses and local governments, reforms to unemployment insurance and workers' compensation were enacted this year to modernize and simplify the systems and save employers \$1.2 billion.



Assemblymember McDonald speaks at the groundbreaking for the Sheridan Hollow Redevelopment Partnership on May 16, 2013.



Assemblymember McDonald joins other state and local elected officials at the groundbreaking for Albany South End Revitalization Phase 3 on June 13, 2013.

SNUG

I am proud to have supported, with my Assembly and Senate colleagues, an award of \$280,000 in SNUG funding for 2013-2014. Coupled with the \$150,000 contribution from the City of Albany this extends the SNUG program until the end of June 2014. This initiative has proven to reduce and prevent gun-related crimes and violence within the community and helps to foster neighborhood stabilization and revitalization. It is investments such as SNUG that will lead to the revitalization of our established neighborhoods, some of which are seeing true revitalization as evidenced by projects such as the Capitol South Campus Center, South End Revitalization Phase 3 and Sheridan Hollow Redevelopment.

Assemblymember McDonald has sponsored or co-sponsored a variety of significant legislation, including bills that:

- provide that any state officer or local officer convicted of a felony involving breach of public trust be subject to forfeiture of pension benefits
- authorize municipalities to treat unpaid building code, property maintenance and nuisance fines as delinquent taxes and impose tax liens upon the real property
- establish early voting in primary, general and special elections in the State of New York.
- provide a mechanism to enable the Governor to propose and the Legislature to consider real and substantial unfunded mandate relief to local governments and school districts
- require legislative fiscal impact notes to include objective calculations of anticipated economic impacts on state or political subdivisions
- enact the agreement among the states to elect the president by national popular vote
- require any state mandated program imposed on municipalities and school districts to be funded by the state
- enact the 2013 Fair Elections Act which provides optional public financing of campaigns for state elections that allows challengers and incumbents to compete fairly while capping the amount of public funds expended
- create a public-private partnership for the local community to sponsor specific state-owned trails that will help to promote local tourism, and maintain, preserve and enhance trails
- establish a small business tax credit for the employment of disabled persons



Assemblymembers Fahy and McDonald welcomed Albany Police Athletic League's summer camp during a visit to the New York State Capitol.

Assemblymember McDonald serves on the following committees:

Aging

Cities

Mental Health and
Developmental Disabilities

Real Property Taxation

Tourism, Parks, Arts & Sports Development



Assemblymember McDonald debating on the floor of the Assembly chambers during legislative session.