



JEFF GALLAHAN  
Assemblyman, 131<sup>st</sup> District

THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER  
Racing and Wagering  
Committee

COMMITTEES  
Aging  
Housing  
Local Governments  
Tourism, Parks, Arts and  
Sports Development

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Dear Neighbor,

As your Assemblyman, having my finger on the pulse of our community is my top priority. **My mission as your representative in the New York State Assembly has been, and always will be, to serve you by making the best voting decisions possible with the goal of leaving our state better than we found it.**

Lack of transparency in government is one of the many things I have sought to address, which is why I have worked as hard as possible to be as available to my constituents and present in the community. Good governance starts at the community level and **my job is to make sure your voices are clearly heard.**

Going into this year's legislative session, ensuring Upstate families and small businesses had the support they need to achieve the American dream was top of mind. So often people get distracted by the loud voices, special interests, and overdramatic news headlines, forgetting what government is truly about— serving the people by putting in place common-sense legislation to help make our state the best it can be. Unfortunately, the 2024 Legislative Session fell short of those ideals.

Each year, drafting the state budget gives our lawmakers the opportunity to showcase their legislative priorities to the public and share their vision for our great state. Total spending in the FY 2024-25 New York State Budget ballooned to **\$239.2 billion<sup>1</sup>, the largest budget in state history.** I believe strongly in the importance of fiscal responsibility. This overspending is unsustainable for taxpayers. That, among a laundry list of other concerns, is why **I voted against this year's state budget.**

Rising prices and slowing economic growth continue to take a toll on middle-class families. New York's notoriously hostile business climate continues to drive out small businesses and discourage new investment. Upstate families and businesses struggled to keep their heads above water. **During this period of inflation, the governor chose to send \$2.4 billion to New York City to support migrants<sup>2</sup> in her budget proposal.**

The governor's education proposal called for significant reductions to Foundation Aid, including the elimination of the 'hold harmless' provision, which would have led to half of all school districts statewide receiving less Foundation Aid than they did last year. **These proposed funding cuts would have hurt rural schools the most. Without this crucial funding, many schools in the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly District would have been forced to reduce programming and extra-curricular activities.<sup>3</sup>**

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1 <https://www.budget.ny.gov/pubs/archive/fy25/en/fy25fp-en.pdf>

2 <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/03/25/new-york-budget-hochul-00148731>

3 <https://www.timesunion.com/state/article/half-new-york-schools-see-loss-foundation-aid-18622233.php>

Under her plan, school districts could have seen Foundation Aid cuts of more than 48% compared to what they received last year<sup>4</sup>, while others could have seen Foundation Aid cuts totaling nearly \$8 million<sup>5</sup>. To compensate for such a devastating loss of state funding, many communities would have been left with no choice but to raise property taxes while reducing services available for students. If this change had gone through, it would have truly been a disservice to children and educators throughout our state.

Assemblymembers across the aisle agreed that our children are the future, not bargaining chips in budget negotiations. **Together, we put an end to the Governor's plan and ensured that our schools will continue to receive the funding they need** to educate the next generation of successful young men and women.<sup>6</sup>

In the midst of the mental health crisis, our young people have been hit especially hard. I am proud New York State is leading the nation in addressing this challenge. **We passed the Stop Addictive Feeds Exploitation (SAFE) for Kids Act (A.8148-A) and the New York Child Data Protection Act (A.8149-A)**. These two pieces of common-sense, bipartisan legislation passed both chambers of the Legislature with near unanimous approval and were signed into law by Governor Hochul on June 20, 2024. These landmark laws will force social media companies to **(1) restrict the availability of addictive features on teen accounts, and (2) restrict how websites are permitted to access and utilize data collected from users who are under the age of eighteen.**<sup>7</sup>

While these were steps in the right direction, there is still so much more work to be done. Crime and public safety remain leading concerns across all sectors of society, young people and businesses continue to leave our state, and many rural communities still struggle to access reliable high-speed internet. These, among other reasons, are why **I look forward to continuing to fight for the residents of my district and the people of Upstate New York!**

In closing, I think it's important to remember that **our state government is your government; and your views matter.** I want you to know that I hear you, and I share your frustrations with the leadership in Albany. I am honored to represent you in the New York State Assembly, and I will never stop fighting to make Upstate New York the best place that I know it can be!

Sincerely,



Jeff Gallahan  
Member of Assembly  
131<sup>st</sup> District

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4 <https://www2.nysed.gov/STATEAID/DIST/EXEC/COMBAD24/641401.HTML>

5 <https://www2.nysed.gov/stateaid/dist/EXEC/COMBAD24/580201.HTML>

6 <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/central-ny/politics/2024/04/25/educators-react-to-state-budget->

7 <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/article/2024/jun/20/new-york-social-media-bill>