



Assemblymember
Robert C. Carroll
 Assembly District 44

April 2, 2019

Greetings –

Yesterday morning the legislature passed a \$175.5 billion state budget. We voted on a total of **10 different budget bills – I voted yes on 9 of them and no on 1**. I voted no on the budget revenue bill because while it did contain one of my top priorities – a congestion pricing plan which is critical to help fund the MTA and improve our environment and streets, it also contained a poison pill that forced my opposition. Instead of doing what we should have done, which is prioritize the voice of the people over large corporations and moneyed interests by creating a public financing of state elections program, this budget creates an unconstitutional commission that will have the power to redraft many of our election laws. This commission, which was created by the Governor in the dark of night subverts the Assembly’s legislative authority and asks the legislature to abdicate its responsibility. It’s unacceptable and should have been rejected. As a matter of conscience I could not vote in support of the budget revenue bill and I asked my colleagues to do the same.

[Here are my remarks from the Assembly floor explaining my vote:](#)



Some other budget highlights include:

Congestion Pricing/Revenue for the MTA

In the budget we voted to require that the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority (TBTA) establish a Central Business District (CBD) tolling program for roads, bridges and tunnels from 60th Street and south in Manhattan, excluding the FDR and West Side Highways, which will provide \$15 million for the MTA capital improvements. The plan also requires the establishment of a traffic mobility review board, which will make recommendations regarding the CBD toll amount, and will be tasked with examining traffic and ensuring annual revenues. This is an issue that I have fought for since my election in 2016 and I am happy that it’s in the budget. Additionally, the budget increased New York City’s existing real estate transfer tax by 0.25 percent on commercial sales of \$2 million or more and residential sales of \$3 million or more and expands the “mansion tax” on residential trades of \$1 million or more. We also added new tiers - starting at 1.25 percent for transactions between \$2 million and \$3 million and increasing to 3.9 percent for homes selling at or above \$25 million. The state estimates that this tax will raise \$365 million for the MTA. We also approved an Internet Sales Tax which will require third-party retail sites – like Amazon to charge sales tax when a buyer in New York purchases something from a retailer on their site. This is projected to add another \$320 million to the MTA. These two measures and congestion pricing should generate the necessary funding to institute the Fast Forward plan, which is essential to updating and upgrading our entire mass transit system.

Plastic Bag Ban

The budget protects our waterways and environment by banning plastic carry out bags, and authorizing counties and cities to impose a five-cent fee on paper bags. If they choose to opt-in, 40 percent of the funds raised from the fee will help cities and counties purchase and distribute reusable bags, especially in low and fixed-income communities. The other 60 percent will go to the Environmental Protection Fund.

[Here are my remarks from the floor in support of a ban on plastic bags:](#)



Criminal Justice Reform

It is long past time that we reform our antiquated criminal justice system. This year's budget plan includes legislation that the Assembly Majority has championed in the past, including eliminating cash bail for most misdemeanor and non-violent felony offenses, because wealth should not determine if a person accused but not convicted of a crime sits in jail while awaiting trial. It also enacts a necessary reform of the speedy trial provisions in New York's Criminal Procedure Law. And it reforms laws governing the exchange of information in criminal cases – discovery law – requiring early, scheduled disclosure.

Early Voting and Electronic Poll Books

I led the effort in the Assembly by getting 44 of my colleagues to sign a budget letter to get funding for early voting and electronic poll books, so I was pleased that the budget includes \$10 million for early voting and \$14.7 million to carry out a number of reforms that were passed earlier this year. The funding will go to counties use of electronic poll books, provide uniform polling hours for primary elections across the state and enact the Voter Enfranchisement Modernization Act, which establishes an online voter registration system. Also included in the budget is language to increase time allotted without loss of pay for an employee to vote, and to prohibit lobbyists, PACs, labor unions and independent expenditure committees from making loans to candidates for political office.

Education

While this budget includes \$27.86 billion in General Support for Public Schools, a \$1 billion increase over the 18-19 school year, and a total of \$18.4 billion in Foundation Aid, it only secured an increase of \$622 million in Foundation Aid, which is less than half of what the Assembly proposed in its one house budget resolution. Without fully funding foundation aid, we are selling our students short – this fight must continue in the years ahead.

I look forward to spending the rest of the legislative session working on further measures to improve our election laws, green our environment and continue to improve our mass transit, education and health care systems. If there is an issue in the budget that you would like to talk to me about, please email my office at carrollr@nyassembly.gov and my office will respond.

See you around the neighborhood,

Bobby

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