



Dear neighbors and community,
We are in the final days of the budget negotiations and I wanted to dedicate this newsletter to outlining the process we are going through and highlight the budget bills and items that I champion that are still active in the budget negotiations.

Onward and upward,
Anna

State Budget

Each year, New York State passes a budget that funds everything from schools to roads, healthcare and housing. The full budget spans over 4,000 pages and 9 budget bills. Unlike a standard business budget the state budget includes both policy language (some that have fiscal implications and some that do not) and budget allocations and reallocations from the prior year. Below I have included a step by step review of the budget process with relevant links to and highlight summaries.

STEP 1: Governor's Executive Budget Proposal

In January, the Governor introduced her [Executive Budget](#). The New York State Budget is divided into nine separate bills, each covering a specific area of state spending. These are often referred to as the Article VII budget bills (Article VII of the NYS Constitution governs the Budget process), and they accompany the Appropriations Bill that actually authorizes spending. The Article VII bills include the policy language of the budget.

Here are the 9 key bills included in the NYS 2025 executive budget proposal:



1. [State Operations Budget Bill](#) – Funds the operation of state agencies.
2. [Aid to Localities Budget Bill](#) – Provides funding to local governments, school districts, etc.
3. [Capital Projects Budget Bill](#) – Funds infrastructure, construction, and capital improvements.
4. [Public Protection and General Government \(PPGG\) Article VII Bill](#) – Covers law enforcement, corrections, and general state government policies.

5. [Education, Labor and Family Assistance \(ELFA\) Article VII Bill](#) – Covers education, labor, social services, and family-related programs.
6. [Health and Mental Hygiene \(HMH\) Article VII Bill](#) – Covers public health, Medicaid, mental health, and related services.
7. [Transportation, Economic Development and Environmental Conservation \(TED\) Article VII Bill](#) – Covers transportation funding, economic initiatives, and environmental programs.
8. [Revenue Article VII Bill](#) – Addresses tax policy and revenue generation.
9. [Debt Service Budget Bill](#) – Allocates funds to pay the state's debt obligations.

The Appropriations Bill (sometimes listed as a 10th bill) provides the actual legal authority for the state to spend money as outlined in the budget.

STEP 2: Legislative Proposals – Assembly & Senate One-House Budgets

After reviewing the Governor's proposal, the State Assembly and State Senate each create their own budget proposals, known as One-House Budgets. These reflect the priorities of each legislative chamber and are the legislative responses to the executive budget proposal. Each one-house budget proposal starts with the executive proposal and either removes, adds, or modifies sections of the executive proposal. Here are highlights of the two one-house proposals:

-  [Assembly Budget Proposal](#)
 - [Speaker's Summary](#)
 -  [Senate Budget Proposal](#)
 - [Majority Leader's Summary](#)
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STEP 3: Negotiations & Final Budget

Once all three proposals are on the table, negotiations begin between the Governor, Assembly, and Senate to reach a final agreement. This is where specific bill language is negotiated, and funding levels are finalized.

While the goal is to pass the budget by April 1st, delays happen — especially when there are major disagreements over policy-related issues as has happened over the last several years as we are finding again this year.

Highlights: Anna's Budget Priorities that were included in either the Assembly or Senate one-house budget proposals

When a new bill is introduced in the Assembly an informal fiscal analysis is done. If a bill is expected to have a non-nominal fiscal impact it is considered a budget bill and must be considered in the context of the budget. An Assembly member has two options at this point - negotiate with the governor to have it included in the executive proposal or advocate for inclusion in one of the one house budget proposals.

Each house has a different culture and strategy concerning the budget. The Assembly works to minimize policy in the budget and often removes or modifies much of the governor's policy proposals and for members' legislative proposals will prioritize adding the funding but often not the policy language. The theory is that this will streamline the budget process and keep it focused on the budget keeping a balance of power between the legislature and executive (see [Silver v. Pataki](#)). Legislation can be passed after the budget for those policies where funding was secured during the budget process. The Senate, like the governor, uses the budget process to negotiate policy and fiscal allocations equally. The budget process typically spans 50-60% of the annual legislative session and therefore is a valuable period for policy considerations. It is also a period where significant policy can be negotiated all at once and signed into law without significant delay. Both strategies have significant merit.

Each year I work off session to negotiate for budget-related legislation in the executive budget proposal and continue to advocate for this legislation with my senate counterparts to get in either one or both of the one-house proposals. Given the philosophy and practice of the Assembly to avoid inclusion of any policy language, I focus on bill language inclusion in the Senate one-house in collaboration with my Senate counterparts. Once it is included it is officially part of the three way negotiation and I continue to advocate for both funding and bill language from that point until the end of the budget negotiations. This year, a handful of important bills that I champion and sponsor were included in the one-house budget proposals:

A2101 - Green Affordable Pre-Electrification (GAP) Fund - \$100 million in funding was earmarked in the Assembly one-house for this fund and the bill language was included in the Senate one-house.

This would establish the Green Affordable Pre-electrification (GAP) program. There are several great NYSEERDA programs like Empower+ that help income-qualifying families improve the energy efficiency of their homes and transition to all-electric. However, the home must be shovel-ready for these projects. If the home needs, for example, a new roof or mold remediation, then the home is disqualified for the NYSEERDA efficiency programs. The GAP fund would provide this funding for retrofits and ensure that the lowest income homeowners in the state are not disqualified from the very programs designed to help them. The state would become more energy efficient and move toward our climate goals.

A5150 - Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring and Prevention (HABMAP) Act - Both the Assembly and the Senate included \$12.5 million in their one-house budget proposals for a total of \$25 million and the Senate included the bill language in their one-house (*TEDE S3008b Part III, pages 168–172*). Harmful

Algal Bloom Monitoring and Prevention Act (HABMAP) would address a critical environmental threat to our lakes and waterways by establishing a statewide program for monitoring, evaluating, preventing, and mitigating harmful algal blooms (HABs). Toxic HABs pose a growing threat to the viability and safety of our water resources, the survival of wildlife, and to the economic stability of the regions across the state that are dependent on tourism and recreation. We must bring together all existing data, find and fill data gaps, and identify and implement best practices for intervention and prevention of HABS.

A3091 - Aid to municipalities to support clean up efforts for emerging contaminants on public lands - the Senate included \$20 million as well as the bill language in their one-house budget proposal.

New York has made leading investments in protecting our drinking water from emerging contaminants through Clean Water Infrastructure Act (CWIA). However, CWIA does not address the costs borne by local governments when contaminated sites are found in their communities with no private responsible party and before contaminants reach drinking water. This legislation and funding would establish a grant program for municipal environmental restoration projects. It will allow localities to access up to \$20 million for remediation projects targeting PFAS “forever chemicals.”

A3026 - Increase in Environmental Conservation Fees to establish a DEC enforcement fund - the Senate included the bill language in their one-house budget proposal that would raise revenue for the department.

This bill would increase environmental conservation fees and penalties (e.g. illegal dumping in state parks, wild animal abuse) and direct funds to a conservation enforcement account. Many of these fees have not been raised in decades and it is time to update them and ensure that they are providing a sufficient disincentive to illegal actions both by individuals and more significantly by corporations. This bill would provide for a timely increase in fees that can be used to enforce all of our environmental laws that we are currently failing to enforce effectively to achieve the goals that were intended.

S1850 - The Safe Water Infrastructure Action (SWAP) Program - the Senate included \$100 million as well as the bill language in their one-house budget proposal.

While the Clean Water Infrastructure Act (CWIA) competitive grant-based program is an excellent program for large-scale projects, there is no funding vehicle for regular preventive maintenance of local water infrastructure. The Safe Water Infrastructure Action Program would create a formula-based funding stream to localities to support regular repairs and rehabilitation of existing water infrastructure, to better prevent problems before they become large-scale capital needs, saving the state money in the long run.

A3607 – The Mental Health Educational Opportunity Program (MH EOP) - The Senate included the bill language for this program in their one-house budget proposal.

Funding would establish the mental health educational opportunity and higher education opportunity programs. We have a severe shortage of mental health workers in institutional centers, schools, assisted living centers, supportive housing, senior centers, jails and prisons, higher education, hospitals and on and on yet we cannot mandate additional staff because the certified workforce does not exist! We must build the workforce first before we can fill the vacancies. Additionally, there is a significant lack of mental health professionals of diverse backgrounds which is needed to better serve struggling non-white or non-English speaking New Yorkers. This legislation would provide additional educational opportunities for income-qualifying students who enroll in SUNY academic programs that lead to a degree or degrees required for licensure in any mental health profession.

A1499 - the New York Long-Term Care Trust Act study - The Assembly one-house proposal included \$2 million to perform the study outlined in this bill to determine qualifications for the program that would cover up to 3 years of universal long term care.

The New York State Department of Health estimates that by 2030, more than 5.3 million New Yorkers will be over the age of 60. Many will need long-term care services at some point in their later years. Often it is not until a parent or other family member is suddenly faced with a need for care, whether in-home services and supports or nursing home care, that we come face to face with the failings of our long-term care system. Contrary to what many believe, the federal Medicare program provides for time-limited rehabilitative care but does not pay for long-term care. To qualify for long term care through the Medicaid program, New Yorkers must deplete income and assets leaving very little to cover daily living expenses. Additionally, the alternative of purchasing a private long-term care insurance policy has become increasingly unaffordable. The New York Long Term Care Trust Program, as created by this bill, would provide universal long-term care benefits at an initial rate of \$200 per day for a lifetime limit of 365 full days worth of benefits, funded by a modest payroll tax. In Washington State, where a similar successful program has been enacted, it amounted to 58 cents out of every \$100 in wages.

The Agrivoltaics Research Program, second year of funding - Both the Assembly and Senate included in their one-house proposals \$1 million for the second year of program funding.

On December 8th, 2023 the Governor signed a bill I sponsored with my colleague Senator Rachel May to establish the Agrivoltaics Research Program ([A4911/S7081](#)) and \$1 million was included in the 2023 budget to start the 3-year program. The program was designed to develop science-based and region-specific recommendations for the co-location of crops and solar power arrays while promoting biodiversity of flora

and fauna. The research will provide guidance on best practices on implementing agrivoltaics throughout New York State that will be disseminated through cooperative extensions across the state. We are in a time when we must both escalate our installation of renewable energy infrastructure to meet our climate goals and simultaneously preserve all of our farmland as droughts, fires, and floods overtake many farmland strongholds across the country. Agrivoltaics, when implemented correctly, will enable both agricultural production and renewable energy generation to exist simultaneously while providing multiple revenue streams to farmers. It is critical that we continue this research program to its conclusion so these best practices can be disseminated throughout the state.

WHILE it's exciting to see these bills and priorities still actively being discussed in the negotiations, I have a healthy dose of realism when it comes to the final budget. The One-house budgets by the nature of the process add to the original Executive proposal and thus the three-way negotiation is a process of whittling down on these additions. This is the process that requires year after year of dogged determination.

Hot Topics in the Budget Negotiations

In addition to the bills that I sponsor, I support a variety of legislation and state-wide initiatives led by my colleagues in the Assembly and Senate. I have highlighted a handful of these topics that were included in the Assembly one-house proposal:

Human Services

- The Assembly included a proposed 7.8% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for workers in the human services sector. This adjustment would help address staffing shortages and support the workforce that provides essential care across New York.

Education

- The Assembly proposes \$38.5 billion in General Support for Public Schools, a \$2.7 billion increase over the prior year including:
 - \$2 billion increase in Foundation Aid with adjustments to the funding formula to better support English language learners and high-needs districts.
 - An additional \$327 million for prekindergarten, including \$25 million for statewide universal full day prekindergarten grant.
 - The Senate proposes \$180 million for after school programming (LEAP Grants) and \$150 million for Universal Pre-K expansion.
- The Assembly supports the Executive proposal for universal school meals along with expanded farm-to-school programs to include breakfast and snacks.
- The Assembly proposes establishing the New York College Access Program (NYCAP) to offer free tuition for community college and associate degree programs without age or study field restrictions.

- The Assembly proposes \$300 million for SUNY critical maintenance and \$600 million for research facilities.
- The Assembly supports a \$212 million investment in opportunity programs (including HEOP, EOP, SEEK, CSTEP, STEP, Liberty Partnerships).

Childcare and Family Support

- The Assembly proposes \$2 billion for childcare subsidies, an increase of \$212.5 million over the Executive's proposal, aimed at creating and preserving childcare slots.
- \$100 million in additional funding is proposed in the Assembly one-house for afterschool programs, adding 40,000 slots, and \$5 million for providers serving high-needs youth.
- The Assembly also eliminates the minimum wage eligibility requirements for childcare assistance.
- The Assembly and Senate include the Working Families Tax Credit to replace the more modest and restrictive Empire State Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit to provide direct support to low- and moderate-income households. The WFTC would:
 - provide **up to \$1,600 per child annually**, guarantee a **minimum of \$100 per child**, and allow **quarterly payments** instead of annual disbursements.
 - adjust for inflation and remove caps on the number of eligible children, expanding access to larger families and those with children under the age of four.

Transportation Infrastructure

Both chambers are proposing increases in funding for the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) and Pave NY, which support local road and infrastructure maintenance.

Housing

- The Assembly and the Senate both included \$250 million to establish the Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP) to provide housing assistance to low-income individuals and families at risk of homelessness.
- The Assembly proposes \$225 million for upstate public housing, along with targeted funding for senior housing and rural housing preservation.
- The Assembly supports \$50 million for eviction defense funding outside of NYC, and language to codify the Homeowner Protection Program to provide free legal services to prevent foreclosure and deed theft.
- Both houses support \$100 million in infrastructure funding for Pro-Housing communities and \$100 million to incentivize starter homes and first-time homebuyer support.

Workforce Development

- The Assembly proposal includes \$694 million for workforce training and education programs, and \$35.3 million for Bundy Aid to support nonprofit higher education institutions.
- The Assembly proposes \$1 million for Real Life Rosies (women in manufacturing), \$3 million for NY innovation hotspots, and \$90 million for workforce programs in underserved communities.
- The Assembly also proposes expanding eligibility for SUNY Community Colleges, restoring funding for Cornell Cooperative Extension, and creating the New York College Access Program to increase scholarship support.
- The Assembly proposes to extend the Excelsior Jobs Program with adjustments to support semiconductor workforce development.
- The Assembly proposes \$850 million in annual funding to support increased wages for frontline workers providing services through the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD).

Environmental Investments

Both the Assembly and Senate budgets propose increases to environmental programs, including:

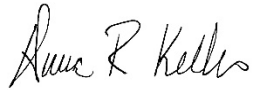
- The Assembly and Senate propose a \$100 million increase to the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF).
- The Assembly proposed an additional \$100 million for the Clean Water Infrastructure Act (CWIA) for additional large-scale water infrastructure projects. The Senate proposed an increase of \$200 million with \$100 million to go to Lead Pipe remediation projects and \$100 million for the Safe Water Infrastructure Action (SWAP) program.

Corrections and Public Safety

- The Assembly includes \$2 million to support reentry programs, with a focus on training in green energy and sustainable industries.

NOTE - Corrections-related policies including rollbacks of the 2019 discovery reform, and expansion of the use of involuntary confinement are currently causing significant delays in the budget negotiations. I do not support the proposals outlined in the governor's executive proposal to rollback discovery reforms in the manner she outlined, which will once again put all the burden on the defense to uncover evidence and will undo the reduction in coerced plea deals that we have seen since the reforms took effect. I also believe we would be better served if we properly invested in supportive housing and programs to reduce homelessness, treat substance use disorder, and provide comprehensive mental health services than increasing the scope of temporary involuntary confinement that leads to further trauma, growing distrust of authority, and vulnerability.

In good health,



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