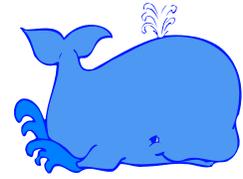


## Suffolk Region PTA



**Stephanie Gurin**  
**Legislative Chair – Advocacy Team**  
**legislativeadvocacy@suffolkpta.org**  
**516-236-2781 - cell #**

## **APRIL REPORT**

### **Governor Signs \$220B Budget Boosted By Federal Aid**

New York is set to rely on an influx of federal funds and higher-than-expected tax revenues to balance a \$220 billion, one-year state budget, which Gov. Kathy Hochul signed on Saturday, April 9th. Here is a look into the budget:

**TAX RELIEF** - Homeowners can expect tax relief: New York is set to spend \$2.2 billion in one-time property tax rebates for low- and middle-income homeowners. That rebate would arrive this fall. New York is also set to decrease tax rates for the middle class by \$162 million by April 2023, instead of waiting until 2025 to fully phase in those long-planned tax cuts.

**BAIL, GUN CRIMES** - The budget would follow through with Gov. Hochul's proposal to give judges more power to jail people who were repeatedly ticketed for minor theft or property damage offenses. Judges would have to release people if the court determines the alleged theft is "negligible" and not "in furtherance of other criminal activity."

**GAS TAX CUT** - New York will cut state gas taxes by 16 cents a gallon from June 1 until the end of the year in response to soaring gasoline prices, with the state asking counties to consider doing the same.

**TO-GO COCKTAILS** - Liquor and wine are set to be available for take-out and delivery for three years, as long as the purchase includes a "substantial food item." That revives a practice instituted during the pandemic to help struggling restaurants.

**MENTAL HEALTH** - Courts would be able to order people to undergo more assisted outpatient treatment if they are perceived to be a threat to themselves or others. This is an expansion of Kendra's Law, which New York passed on a trial basis in 1999 when 32-year-old Kendra Webdale was pushed in front of a subway train by a man living with untreated schizophrenia. The law is set to expire June 30, but the budget would extend that expiration to 2027.

**CASINOS. BUFFALO BILLS** - The state plans to start accepting bids for three new casinos this year, one year earlier than planned. A new casino will need two-thirds approval from a community board consisting of political appointees selected by the governor, mayor and state and local representatives. Lawmakers are also allowing Gov. Hochul to move forward with a deal to send \$600 million in state funds for the Buffalo Bills' new stadium, in order to ensure that the Bills do not leave New York. Erie County will pitch in another \$250 million. The state will provide over \$250 million in capital and maintenance subsidies over three decades.

**HOUSING HELP** - The spending plan directs \$250 million to help New Yorkers with unpaid utility bills and \$925 million for landlords struggling with overdue rent amid the pandemic.

**CHILD CARE** - New York will spend about \$1 billion over the next fiscal year to increase eligibility for child care subsidies to 300% of the federal poverty level, which is \$83,250 for a family of four. Gov. Hochul said the move will help expand access for more than half of New York's young people. The plan will also increase reimbursement rates for certain child care providers.

**HEALTH WORKER PAY** - The state would spend \$7.4 billion over several years to give a \$3-per-hour raise to home care aides who bathe, feed and provide other non-medical services in clients' homes. The budget also includes \$1.2 billion in bonuses for other health care workers, aimed at keeping people in the industry after a grueling two years.

**UNDOCUMENTED HEALTH** - The spending plan pares down a proposed \$345 million for a state health coverage option for more than 150,000 low-income New Yorkers whose immigration status bars them from getting health insurance. Instead, New York is set to only expand access for New Yorkers living in the state illegally who are age 65 or older. The cost of the new plan was unclear Friday.

**CLIMATE SPENDING** - Voters in November will decide whether to approve \$4.2 billion in bonds to fund environmental and energy projects such as conservation, climate-change mitigation, zero-emission school busses and green buildings. The budget doesn't include Hochul's proposal to ban natural gas in new buildings, to the disappointment of climate activists. She said she hopes to keep trying to pass that change.

**EDUCATION** - The FY 2023 Budget includes a record \$31.5 billion in total school aid for school year 2023, the highest level of State aid ever, and \$8.2 billion in support for higher education.

- \$1.5 billion foundation aid increase for 2022-23 brings us two-thirds of the way to complete implementation of the formula that state lawmakers approved 15 years ago, with a promise of full funding in the next fiscal year. What's more, a 3% minimum foundation aid boost for school districts brings an important added element of fairness at a time when all schools are coping with heightened inflation

- \$125 Million Increase in Pre-Kindergarten for Four-Year-Old Children
- \$100 Million To Provide Academic and Mental Health Supports for Students and Educators
- \$2.2 Billion in New Capital for SUNY and CUNY Campuses
- \$500 Million in New Operating Support for SUNY and CUNY
- \$150 Million of Tuition Assistance for Part Time Students

**Link to Education Details on the Budget:** <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-unprecedented-support-education-fy-2023-budget-including-315-billion>

**Link to FY 2023 Budget:** <https://www.governor.ny.gov/programs/fy-2023-new-york-state-budget>

## **Cannabis Conversations**

New York State is starting a public health education campaign around cannabis. Governor Hochul announced “Cannabis Conversations” will provide information on the state’s Cannabis Law, including who can consume, where to consume, and how to consume safely. The campaign is intended to provide parents and caregivers with tools to protect youth, remind New Yorkers of the risks of driving while impaired by cannabis, and other messages to help keep New Yorkers safe and healthy as the new industry develops. The messages will be distributed in English and Spanish through public service announcements on television, radio, transit, billboards, and social media. For more information: <https://cannabis.ny.gov/cannabis-conversations>