



Assemblymember
Ellen Jaffee
Assembly District 97

Dear Friends,



The 2016-17 State Budget marks a monumental turning point in New York history: Increasing the minimum wage statewide and providing 12 weeks of [paid family leave](#). The Assembly Majority has long stood for these progressive policies that will help hardworking families thrive.

I am disappointed that the budget does not make a more substantial investment in child care, especially the \$190 million needed to comply with the federal [child care block grant](#) requirements. It is critical that we invest in keeping our children healthy and safe and our hardworking families self-sufficient. Next year we must substantially increase child-care funding.

I am pleased to report the budget makes a robust investment in [education](#). Look for my *Special Edition: Education Budget E-News* later this month.

~Ellen~

Raising the Minimum Wage to \$15

Gradually increasing the [minimum wage](#) to \$15 will help lift working families out of poverty and give them a pathway to the middle class. While NYC, Westchester and Long Island will benefit from this increase sooner, workers in Upstate New York and Rockland County, will be reaching \$12.50 per hour by 2020. A mechanism to slow down the increases was also put in place to assist our business community if the economy is not doing well. This smart approach will help our families while assuring our businesses can remain in Rockland.

Paid Family Leave



New York State's paid family leave program, the most comprehensive in the nation, mandates up to 12 weeks of paid leave to care for a new child, including adopted or foster children, or a seriously ill family member. Funded through a small employee contribution, the program will be implemented at a gradual rate, starting in 2018 with 8 weeks of paid leave offered at 50 percent of weekly income; in 2019, the benefit will increase to 10 weeks, and in 2021, employees will be able to take 12 weeks of paid leave at the full two-thirds of weekly pay.

Battling the Heroin Epidemic

The heroin and opioid abuse crisis is hurting families and communities throughout New York State. The [budget](#) makes the necessary investment to curb this epidemic and help people get the treatment they need to overcome addiction. The goal is to help reduce addiction, restore the lives of those affected by drug abuse, keep our communities safe and protect the environment from these harmful substances through the responsible disposal of opioid and pharmaceutical drugs.

Investing in infrastructure, Improving transportation

Safe, reliable roads, bridges and public transportation are critical for New Yorkers. The [budget](#) makes the significant investment in our infrastructure that is essential to a growing economy and a reliable transportation network. To help Rockland and other local governments pay for these improvements, the budget increases funding by \$400 million over four years for the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS). The budget will also ensure the tolls at the Tappan Zee bridge remain at \$5.00 until 2020.

Protecting the Environment with Infrastructure Improvements

No one should have to worry about whether their water is safe to drink. The [budget](#) will provide \$500 million to critical environmental programs, including \$200 million in additional funds for water and sewer infrastructure improvements. The funding will help communities update their infrastructure and ensure public health.

Budget Awards Rockland Water Task Force \$250,000

I was pleased to spearhead the effort to secure \$250,000 in the budget for the Rockland County [Water Task Force](#) to continue its work. Water conservation is paramount in Rockland County if we wish to avoid building expensive and unnecessary water sources that would also increase the cost of water for residents and businesses alike. I congratulate the Task Force for its forward-thinking approach and focus on conservation to ensure we have a safe, affordable, and sustainable water supply now and for generations to come.



Helping Seniors



Seniors have played an integral role in the growth of our communities and the county. This year's budget helps more older New Yorkers to remain in their homes and to receive the best possible care. The budget includes additional funding to support Community Services for the Elderly, which helps communities better serve seniors and ensure their needs are met; restores support for the New York Foundation for Senior Citizens Home Sharing and Respite Care program, which helps seniors live fuller, safer lives in their own homes, and restores support for the [New York Statewide Senior Action Council](#), Inc. for the patients' rights hotline and advocacy project to help low-income and minority seniors.