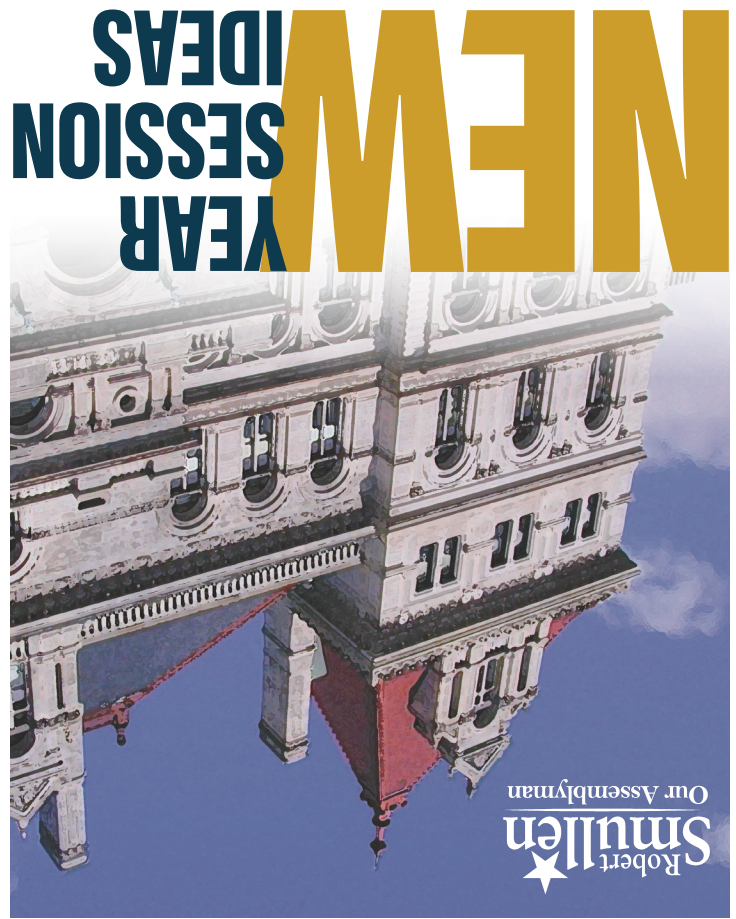
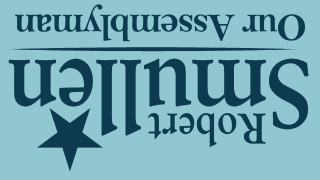




Assemblyman Robert Smullen (Mohawk Valley and the Adirondacks) (middle right) attends a rural equity forum alongside Assemblyman Anil Beephan, Jr. (East Fishkill) (middle left), Assemblyman Brian Maher (Walden) (far left) and Assemblyman Matt Slater (Yorktown) (far right).

I am very excited to kick off this legislative session! I am thrilled to once again serve alongside my colleagues in the Assembly. We will continue to bring new ideas and bold strategies to the table, improving our state's rural equity and economy for our families and businesses.



New York State Assembly
Albany, NY 12248

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“New Yorkers are looking for a breath of fresh air this year. They want to see lawmakers take back control of our state’s economy as too many residents cannot afford to remain in New York and do not feel financially secure. They want their voices heard from every corner of the state as so many living in rural areas feel their opinions and ideas are being drowned out. Like me, more than anything, New Yorkers want change. And that is exactly what I intend to fight for in the months ahead.”



RURAL EQUITY INITIATIVES

This past year, my fellow assemblymembers and I met with state and local representatives to discuss what we could do differently to improve our rural communities. We introduced five initiatives to improve rural equity throughout our state that include:

1. **Creating the Rural Equity Assistance Program**, which will bring more money and resources to rural areas by connecting communities with available economic and development grants and assist in the technical aspects of applying for those grants;¹
2. **Increasing support for first responders** and those serving our communities, which includes creating tax credits for volunteer firefighters and first responders;²
3. **Improving rural school transportation services** for students, which includes repealing the Electric School Bus Mandate, which is being implemented at taxpayers’ expense (a new electric school bus costs anywhere from \$200,000-\$410,000, approximately two to three times the cost of a diesel-powered bus);³
4. **Expanding access to broadband** and increasing cell coverage statewide;⁴ and
5. **Establishing the “EmpowerED” Act** to provide opportunities for students to cross-enroll in classes offered by local schools outside of their home district and expand BOCES services.⁵

¹ A.8136

² A.2044, A.2267, A.2654 and A.4761

³ adirondackexplorer.org/stories/electric-school-bus-mandate

⁴ A.4686 and A.8134

⁵ A.8133

STATE BUDGET STRATEGIES

My goals for this year’s state budget are simple:

- **We must *direct spending responsibly* so funding is not wasted or misused;**
- **We must *avoid tax increases* and fight to lower taxes to alleviate pressure on New York families and businesses; and**
- **Overall, we must *work hard to make our state more affordable* so residents are no longer driven out of state.**



Robert Smullen
Our Assemblyman

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