



CAPITOL NEWS from
THE ASSEMBLY MINORITY CONFERENCE
ASSEMBLYMAN WILL BARCLAY, Minority Leader, New York State Assembly

For Release: **IMMEDIATELY**, February 7, 2020

Contact: Mike Fraser, office: (518) 455-3751; cell: (518) 859-8518

**ADDING PRESSURE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WILL
CONTINUE TO HURT MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILIES**

Legislative Column from Assembly Minority Leader Will Barclay (R,C,I,Ref-Pulaski)

For years, local governments have dealt with increasingly insurmountable financial stress forced upon them by Albany. It has become common practice for the state to pass a law, create a new regulation, or impose a requirement that costs money to implement at the local level. But unfortunately for localities and taxpayers, Albany's forced "mandates" often do not come with the necessary funding to cover the expenses.

The state's basic message to localities is: "Do everything we say, and by the way, you have to pay."

When local budgets tighten, localities are forced to raise taxes in order to meet the new costs. Unfunded mandates are the single-biggest driver of New York's property taxes, which are among the worst in the nation. Passing the permanent 2-percent property tax cap in 2019 was a victory, but adding pressure on municipalities in the 2020-2021 budget would be the worst-case scenario for anyone hoping to see their property taxes go down.

The state has not only forced new costs on local governments, but also reduced Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) funding in last year's budget. The \$59 million cut from last year's budget needs to be restored, at the very least, to help ease the burdens facing localities. At present, that money is being recuperated through local sales tax increases, another substantial weight suppressing growth.

Making matters even worse, Gov. Cuomo's plan to restructure Medicaid, already the most expensive program in America, and facing a \$4 billion shortfall, involves shifting even *more* costs to local governments – estimated at \$150 million annually.

Often, when people talk about budget economics, the conversation gets bogged down by confusing vocabulary and problems start to look unsolvable. Issues that will directly impact taxpayers range from the very basic – New York's property tax rebate check program has expired; to the complex – counties must adhere to the 2-percent tax cap or will be forced to pick up the local share of Medicaid growth.

In reality these problems, at their core, are straightforward and New York's budget is no different. New York State is laying siege to its localities, and middle-class homeowners are being asked to foot the bill.

The best way to corral taxes in New York is to spend less money, and to be prudent with the money hardworking families send to Albany. Until the state takes action on these growing problems, we will continue on the high-tax path that feeds into the affordability crisis, drives residents to other states, and keeps us from reaching our full economic potential.

If you have any questions or comments on this or any other state issue, or if you would like to be added to my mailing list or receive my newsletter, please contact my office. My office can be reached by mail at 200 North Second Street, Fulton, New York 13069, by e-mail at barclayw@nyassembly.gov or by calling (315) 598-5185. You may also find me, Assembly Minority Leader Will Barclay, on Facebook.