



ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Legislative Vice Chairman Dave Donaldson's Statement On Projected 2015 Budget Savings

(Kingston, NY) I wish to thank the New York State Comptroller, Thomas DiNapoli, both on a personal level and as an elected official in Ulster County for his prudent and diligent care of the New York State Retirement system. As a newly retired teacher, the safety of the retirement system is extremely important to my family and as an elected county official the approximate \$3,200,000 less in required contributions this year by the county is well appreciated.

We often hear, time and time again, the complaints from county officials about New York State mandates crippling the county and its municipalities. We also need to recognize when they help. This savings will enable us to hold the line on taxes as well as enable us to start a three-year phase in of the county take over of the burden of election costs that the county mandated from the towns.

With a small increase in appropriations to Ulster County Community College, we should also be able to achieve the goal of heading off another tuition increase. These yearly tuition hikes have been hurting many young adults trying to better themselves by forcing them to attend out of county colleges with considerably cheaper tuition.

The small increase will bring the county closer to providing its one-third share of maintaining the college. The formula created by New York State to maintaining community colleges was one-third state contribution, one-third county contribution and one-third student tuition and fees. Neither the state nor the county pays their full one-third, which results in higher tuition costs for students and/or their families.

It was only a couple of months ago we were advised by the County Executive that both the election costs takeover and the modest increase to the college were impossible because the county was facing a fiscal crisis and hence, they were rejected by the Legislature. Last week, the County Executive, using less than twelve percent (12%) of the above-mentioned savings, included both these changes in his 2015 budget proposal. I applaud the Executive for now recognizing the value and importance of these changes for our constituents and New York State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli for helping provide us with the relief to not only reduce property taxes but fund critical county services for local residents.

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