

***Mark – grade 12  
New York State Budget Amendment  
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October, 2005***

Everybody in New York State should care about the proposed amendment to the state constitution. This amendment will greatly affect the state budget and the process from which it is created. A late budget requires schools and other state-funded services to guess how much money they are going to get until a new budget is put into place. This drastic change is supposed to eliminate the late budget problem that the state has faced for over twenty years. Until this past year, the budget has been chronically late, but could this amendment really change the sad state of affairs that is the New York State government?

The proposed amendment has a few main features. First of all, it would change the beginning of the fiscal year from April 1st to May 1st. This is said to give the politicians in Albany more time to make the budget. If the new budget is not put into place by May 1st then the previous years budget goes into place and all of the new budget is thrown out. This is called a contingency budget, or as I like to call it, a completely ridiculous attempt at making up for a bad job. In this case the Independent Budget Office, who would probably not be elected officials, will decide a completely different new budget to put into place. This just is unnecessary, our elected government should be able to do their job or else they shouldn't be the government, end of story. Another feature is the two year planning that would be required of school districts and local governments.

I am strongly opposed to this amendment, as it is a shady attempt to change the government that can work fine if they just try, as proven by this year's on-time budget. This amendment gives unnecessary power to the legislature. They claim that the

governor has too much power, but this is untrue. There is nothing that the governor can do that they can't override, so what's the big deal? They can add things to the budget, which they do yearly, and even if the governor vetoes their addition they can override that with a 2/3rd vote. Another problem is the lack of pressure that the government will feel. Without pressure from the people to pass the budget on time, they won't really care how great of a job they do. This amendment allows them to pass the responsibility off on to somebody else instead of forcing them to do their job.

Another problem arises with the added power of the legislature on the budget. Since they are a wider range of people they will try to make more people happy, this will result in overspending and higher taxes (as if they aren't high enough already). And just one more added thing that makes this all very shady in my mind. This amendment nullifies the bill that said the legislature won't receive paychecks until a late budget is finally passed. So is it a real attempt at change or a group of people wanting their money?

There are many things that can be done to make sure the budget is on time without amending the constitution. The fiscal year is set by the State Finance Law, which can be changed much easier than the entire constitution. The governor and the legislature just have to work together to change the law and set the start of the fiscal year to May 1st, not too hard. A budget cap would also make things much easier to manage. Not only would it assure an earlier budget, but it would lower taxes and the state debt, but oh no, don't limit spending! Finally, the people who put these incompetent morons into office need to pressure them into doing the job they were put there to do. The people have the power, not the government, and they need to know that.

This November, vote no on this unnecessary amendment to the New York

State constitution. Make the government take responsibility for their actions. The budget was on time this year, there's no reason for it to be late ever again. The power has to shift from the politicians to the people, not from shady politician to shady politician.