

Citizens Budget Commission • Citizens Union
Common Cause New York • Empire Center for Public Policy
League of Women Voters of New York State • Reinvent Albany

March 29, 2023

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of the State of New York
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins
President Pro Tempore and Majority Leader
New York State Senate
Legislative Office Building
188 State Street, Room 907
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Carl Heastie
Speaker
New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building
188 State Street, Room 932
Albany, NY 12248

Re: Please publish basic financial tables when you reach agreement on the budget

Dear Governor Hochul, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, and Speaker Heastie:

We urge you to publish basic, multi-year financial plan tables when you agree on the Fiscal Year 2024 Enacted Budget. These should include at least one financial plan table each for All Funds, State Operating Funds, and the General Fund; and include reasonably disaggregated and totaled lists of receipts, disbursements, transfers, annual bottom line results, and allocations of fund balances.

New Yorkers are initially provided little information about the State's budget agreement. Typically, the Governor and Legislative leaders send out a press release with scant details on basic topline and program spending, year-to-year growth rates, and major fiscal actions. Confusingly, the first detailed information provided to the public often is in appropriations bills that do not reflect what the State plans to spend or when. New Yorkers may reasonably wonder whether the budget was passed

without legislators knowing its size, balance, and multi-year impacts, and why this information is not made public.

Detailed information is provided when the Division of the Budget releases a “financial plan” about four weeks after the Enacted Budget, and with each Executive Budget and quarterly July and October updates. These “financial plans” are approximately 400-pages and include extensive data and narrative description of the State’s fiscal condition that provides vital information to the public. To be clear, we are not suggesting that a full “financial plan” report be produced at the time of budget agreement. We recognize that it is not feasible immediately at that time. However, the basic financial plan tables we are requesting are essential to ensure legislators and the public have a timely, basic understanding of the budget and its implications.

Finally, we recommend that this requirement be codified in State law for both the one-house budget bills and enacted budget.

Many organizations also urged that this action be taken in [advance of last year’s budget agreement](#), and also for the [Legislature to include these tables](#) with their one-house proposals for the same reasons. We hope that you will make this simple improvement this year to provide basic transparency on the size, balance, and out-year impacts of the enacted budget.

Thank you for considering our recommendations.

Sincerely,

Andrew S. Rein
President
Citizens Budget Commission

Tim Hoefler
President & CEO
Empire Center for Public Policy

Betsy Gotbaum
Executive Director
Citizens Union

Laura Ladd Bierman
Executive Director
League of Women Voters of New York State

Susan Lerner
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John Kaehny
Executive Director
Reinvent Albany

cc:

Robert Megna, Director of the New York State Division of the Budget

Liz Krueger, Chair of the Senate Finance Committee

Helene Weinstein, Chair of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee