

LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS' ITEMS AGAIN CUT FROM NYS BUDGET

NYS budget for the 2013-2014 fiscal year is again lacking "Member Items" that benefit individual non-profit agencies. Member item funding expanded over decades allowing State Senators and Assembly Representatives to distribute funds to non-profit agencies in their districts, including volunteer fire and ambulance agencies. Regrettably, the practice sometimes also led to questionable expenditures aimed at shoring up political support and a number of legislators have been convicted of fraud in connection with funds that have been misused. The NY Daily News reported on 2/4/13 that Governor Cuomo's budget proposal put forward on 1/22/13 is free of legislative pork but keeps \$452 million in operating funds and \$2.66 billion in capital funding split between \$1.2 billion for discretionary economic development funding and \$720 million for "transformative" projects. An administration official was quoted saying the governor wants control of the funds to cover "transformational projects, not a new roof on a social club".