

Citizens Budget Commission • Citizens Union

Common Cause New York • Empire Center for Public Policy

New York Public Interest Research Group • Reinvent Albany

February 26, 2024

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

Dear Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Heastie:

We urge both houses of the Legislature to publish basic financial plan tables with the one-house budgets. This would be an important, and we consider essential, increase in transparency.

These tables would allow the public, policy community, and press to more fully understand and compare the various budget plans. All interested parties should know the size, balance, and multi-year impacts of the one-house budgets. This critical information would foster a robust, fact-based discussion that should inform decisions about the State's priorities and direction.

We recommend that your offices:

- Publish with one-house budget proposals 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; and
- Codify in State law the requirement to publish these tables.

New Yorkers are initially provided little information about the one-house budgets. Press releases and floor debates give scant details on basic topline and program spending, year-to-year growth rates, and major fiscal actions. Many of our groups also made this recommendation last year prior to the executive budget and again prior to the enacted budget. Progress on this issue is a priority for our organizations because the public deserves basic fiscal information for budgets that allocate more than \$230 billion annually in public resources.

We have created a sample basic financial plan table for the General Fund (available [here](#)) to illustrate the level of information recommended.

Thank you for considering our recommendations.

Sincerely,

Andrew S. Rein
President
Citizens Budget Commission

Tim Hoefler
President & CEO
Empire Center for Public Policy

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cc:

Blake Washington, Director of the New York State Division of the Budget

Senator Liz Krueger, Chair of the Senate Finance Committee

Assemblymember Helene Weinstein, Chair of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee