

A budget for New Hampshire's needs

Gov. Chris Sununu

GRANITE STATERS sent us to Concord to take action and to address New Hampshire's most critical public policy and program priorities. Last week, we passed a true New Hampshire budget, one without gimmicks or empty promises, and one that will lead us along a path to success for everyone.

This fiscally responsible budget lives within our means, while addressing the most critical priorities of the state. It creates jobs and increases wages through tax cuts, reforms the Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF,) and funds our broken mental health system. Our budget is a bold step in the right direction — a step toward restoring the New Hampshire Advantage, and reaffirming our place as the economic engine of New England. New Hampshire is on a pathway to prosperity, and Republicans are leading the way.

New Hampshire is a great state, but we can and must do better for our people, our communities, and for the businesses that power our economy. Ensuring robust programs for our citizens and a favorable economic climate for our businesses is an obligation we take seriously. Through our pro-growth initiatives, Republicans have fulfilled a commitment we made to the people to provide tax relief that boosts our economy and returns money to your pocket. This budget has so much to offer, but some of the key aspects of our successes that have been outlined below will be transformative for our great state.

The drug crisis: This budget creates the first youth drug treatment center in New Hampshire; doubles the Alcohol Fund, adding \$7 million for treatment and recovery services over the next two years; and establishes a \$4.5 million drug interdiction program to bring together federal, state and local resources to disrupt the supply chain that brings drugs into our state.

Fixing our broken mental health system: This budget dedicates \$22.6 million and added 60 new beds for community treatment options; and creates a fourth rapid response mobile crisis unit to divert hospitalizations for mental health issues.

Reforming DCYF: This budget increases funding by \$4.4 million to ensure proper advocacy for kids, and

We increase funding by \$57 million for the developmentally disabled community to substantially reduce the wait list for services, the largest increase in recent history.

Education reform: The budget includes \$10 million in new student scholarship programs over the next two years; and \$13 million for public charter schools, as well as providing grants to schools that encourage student engagement in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math.

Modernization of career schools: The budget upgrades and rehabilitates the Plymouth and Rochester Career Technical Schools to provide workforce ready students by age 18.

Tax relief for all: We have made critical investments in New Hampshire while living within our means. There are no new taxes or fees, and the state's Rainy Day Fund will increase to over \$100 million, strengthening our financial position and securing our future stability. We are eliminating the Electricity Consumption Tax, which puts money back into everyone's pockets, and reducing business taxes in 2018, 2019, and again in 2021 to empower small business owners to reinvest in workforce and wages.

Infrastructure improvements: We are transferring \$36 million to cities and towns for roads and bridges, and dedicating at least \$10 million to support health and safety issues in public schools, reducing pressures on every property taxpayer in the state.

Renewed focus on economic development: We are creating a new department of Business and Economic Affairs, a one-stop-shop for all business needs to better coordinate all of our business-centric agencies to drive our economy and make businesses and jobs a top priority.

Our first six months in office are over, but our commitment to making New Hampshire the best it can be is only beginning. We will continue to listen and learn. We will continue to promote and to develop. And we will never stop emphasizing that New Hampshire is open for opportunity. Granite Staters deserve results, and I am proud to say that we have delivered a fiscally responsible budget filled with bold, innovative ideas that meets the needs of New Hampshire's citizens.

adds 20 new case workers across the state; and creates an Office of the Child Advocate to provide greater oversight and transparency outside of the division.

Chris Sununu, R-Newfields, is governor of New Hampshire.

Developmentally disabled community: