

ONEONTA, 10/11/21 -- State Senator Peter Oberacker (R/C – Schenevus) and Assemblyman John Salka (R/C – Brookfield) today criticized the governor’s veto of legislation (S.396/A.7618) to assist the Oneonta City School District and local taxpayers.

Senator Peter Oberacker said, “While bragging about her first 45 days in office, Governor Hochul took time out to skewer the Oneonta City School District and local taxpayers. Vetoing commonsense legislation, that received unanimous approval by both the senate and assembly, is clear evidence that our new governor fails to recognize the difficult financial situation Oneonta and many other school districts across our state face.”

Assemblyman John Salka said, “It was an honor to work with our freshman senator on a bill that would have given relief to the Oneonta school district and the taxpayers of the city. It is unfortunate that this governor would rather play politics than address real problems facing our education communities in upstate New York.”

The legislation was also supported by the New York State Schools Boards Association and the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT).

Senate bill 396 would correct a clerical error and assist the Oneonta City School District by preserving \$400,000 in state transportation aid due to the school district. The legislation would correct an oversight in the application process for the district's transportation aid for the 2019-2020 school year, when the district did not file its application for transportation aid to the state education department in a timely fashion.

“Without this legislation, the Oneonta City School District is facing a \$400,000 hit on their budget that will be devastating for the school, local taxpayers, and most importantly our students. The Oneonta City School District has a strong track record when it comes to contractual submissions and required paperwork. This inadvertent oversight involving one item should not lead to an overwhelming penalty that would significantly harm student programming and services, apparently our governor disagrees” Senator Oberacker added.

“To refer this issue over to next year’s budget is playing stall tactics with support for our children’s education and proves that the one-party powers that be in Albany really do not care about education, only how they can continue their smoke and mirrors tactics to fool the public and the taxpayers,” Assemblyman Salka added.

Senator Oberacker and Assemblyman Salka plan to meet with officials from the Oneonta City School District to seek an alternate solution to help avoid the \$400,000 budget shortfall.