

Today's Word On The State Budget is 'Tentative'

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There is no budget deal to report as of this afternoon, but there are a few "tentative" ones the table — or at least floating around the halls of the Capitol.

The first deal would see the state's minimum wage incrementally increased to \$9 an hour by 2016. That deal has some mainstream Senate Democrats rankled. Sen. Mike Gianaris told Susan Arbetter of The Capitol Pressroom that Senate Republicans who cut a deal with the Independent Democratic Conference have "outsize" influence in negotiations and that the deal is "half a loaf."

Sen. David Valesky of the Independent Democratic Conference responded in a statement accusing Gianaris of the "type of absolutism that prevented progress in the past."

Now there is word of a deal on marijuana laws. The New York City Council would be allowed to make possession of small amounts of marijuana in public a ticketable offense rather than an arrestable offense under proposed legislation.

Some upstate legislators are upset that the measure would only impact New York City.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo pressed legislation that would lower penalties for marijuana possession last year but were blocked by Senate Republicans.

Meanwhile, advocates of the DREAM Act that would provide funding to undocumented college students are not getting much good news these days. Speaker Sheldon Silver is reportedly pressing hard for the plan but to no avail.

"Nothing promising" has been a refrain I've heard multiple times today when inquiring about the status of the DREAM Act in budget talks.

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