

LI delegation has praise, concerns about Obama budget

April 10, 2013 by CANDICE RUUD AND TOM BRUNE / candice.ruud@newsday.com,tom.brune@newsday.com

Members of Congress from New York praised President Barack Obama's 2014 budget proposal's focus on technology but voiced concerns about proposed cuts to Social Security.

The budget targets Social Security benefits by supporting a different method of measuring inflation -- a sign of Obama's willingness to reach across the aisle, some said.

"To me the positive is the president is willing to move on entitlement reform," said Rep. Pete King (R-Seaford). "That means that we can start a real debate and to try to reach an overall agreement."

But Sens. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) and Reps. Steve Israel (D-Dix Hills) and Carolyn McCarthy (D-Mineola) all say cutting Social Security isn't an acceptable way to reduce the federal deficit.

"You're facing a generation that's coming in that's gone through almost 10 years of static wages," McCarthy said. "We are going to have to make sacrifices . . . but certainly I'm going to make sure that the most vulnerable -- and those are my seniors and people with disabilities -- are going to have the security so they're not going to be in poverty."

Rep. Tim Bishop (D-Southampton) said the plan "fully funds" the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider atom smasher and the National Synchrotron Light Source II, which aims to provide extremely bright X-rays for research purposes, at Brookhaven National Laboratory in Upton.

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The president's budget calls for boosting basic science research funding by 5.7 percent, including \$165 million to save the collider, the only one remaining in the United States. The facility supports 800 jobs and underpins much of the cutting-edge scientific physics research on Long Island.

King raised concerns about proposed tax hikes on higher-income earners, saying they would hobble the local economy. The Obama budget calls for Americans making more than \$1 million a year to pay at least 30 percent in federal taxes.

"New York and Long Island have a higher percentage of high-income earners," King said. "So it's going to disproportionately affect us, and the cost of living is much higher in New York and on

Long Island."

Kevin Law, chief executive of the Long Island Association, said that while the federal deficit needs to be reduced, Long Islanders "would be inequitably penalized compared to the rest of the country by President Obama's proposal to cap deductions on items such as mortgage interest and state and local taxes."

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