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## Lawmakers Dish Out Fresh Pork

Resolutions passed by state lawmakers in the final hours of the legislative session steered a total of \$56 million to 1,675 pet projects across the state, according to data added today to SeeThroughNY, the Empire Center's transparency website.

The spending includes:

- \$600,000 to construct a solar-powered carousel in Buffalo.
- \$3.5 million to renovate the Blue Cross Arena in Rochester.
- \$24 million in educational "bullet aid" to schools, libraries and other organizations, including \$1 million for the East Ramapo Central School District.

The six resolutions did not include the name of the requesting lawmaker, or, in most cases, a stated purpose for the funding, which was set aside in the state budget. The process was recently criticized by state Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, for both the lack of transparency and, in several cases, the use of debt issued without voter approval, also known as backdoor borrowing.

"Taxpayers never had an opportunity to so much as see where this money is going, let alone weigh in on it, before lawmakers voted to send \$56 million out the door," said Tim Hofer, executive director of the Empire Center. "These grants reflect political priorities, not the public interest."

In addition to listing the grants approved last week, SeeThroughNY's pork spending database has been updated to include the first look at the Capital Assistance Program, a \$350 million slush fund created in 2008 and controlled exclusively by the state Assembly. Data from the state Senate's equivalent, the Economic Development Assistance Program, was posted on SeeThroughNY in January. Both funds use backdoor borrowing to pay for projects. The SeeThroughNY pork database is New York's only comprehensive listing of legislative pork, detailing more than \$1.2 billion in spending.

To view the list, visit [SeeThroughNY.net/pork\\_barrel](http://SeeThroughNY.net/pork_barrel). Users can filter or sort the data by year, recipient, amount and grant type, or can search by the name of the recipient.

The Empire Center, based in Albany, is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan think tank dedicated to promoting policies that can make New York a better place to live, work and do business.