

# Paterson taking kinder approach

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ALBANY -- With lawmakers set to return to the Capitol on Wednesday, Gov. [David Paterson](#) is bringing back his proposals for a property tax cap, wine sales in grocery stores and a penny-per-ounce tax on sugared beverages.

But he's taking a kinder, gentler approach compared with earlier in the session.

Some of his proposals, including a limited tuition differential for [SUNY](#) campuses, will be separated out from the budget bill that still needs to be passed to complete the budget. Paterson on Sunday said he would send lawmakers his package of bills this week.

The governor is also seeking to create a Medicaid contingency "lock box" of \$1.08 billion, in case the federal government reduces spending. That would come from uniform cuts to state agencies.

By offering separate bills on these proposals, the governor appears to be easing his earlier tactic of forcing lawmakers to accept his proposals or face the blame for holding up the state budget.

Additionally, the 2010-11 budget's spending plan was finalized last month, so there's no real threat of a government shut down in the near future. What is still needed is Senate approval of the revenue part of the budget. Still, lawmakers still haven't been paid since April 1 when the budget was due, and as August approaches, they are facing the primary and then the general election season. Legislators who are being challenged don't want to face these races without a completed budget.

Paterson has called lawmakers back for a special session at 6 p.m. Wednesday.

Legislative leaders on Sunday offered little detail on how they would dispose of Paterson's proposals.

"The Senate is ready to finalize a fair and responsible budget and looks forward to working with the Governor and Assembly to get the job done," said Senate Majority Conference Leader [John L. Sampson](#), D-Brooklyn. "We will be speaking with the governor and Senator (John) Sampson. Our goal is to resolve all issues," said [Sisa Moyo](#), spokeswoman for Assembly Speaker [Sheldon Silver](#), D-Manhattan.

The Assembly has steadfastly resisted any talk of capping property taxes. Nor do they support letting SUNY campuses set their own tuition without legislative approval.

The Assembly, though, has approved Paterson's revenue bill. The main holdup has been in the closely divided Senate, where [Democrats](#) control a slim 32-30-seat majority over Republicans.

One of the Democrats, William Stachowski of Buffalo, has been holding out for the SUNY tuition plan which would let SUNY Buffalo move forward with an ambitious expansion plan.