



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## Sens. Klein And Oppenheimer Introduce School Lunch Protection Act

JEFFREY D. KLEIN May 25, 2006



NEW ROCHELLE, NY – With voters rejecting school budgets in more than 70 districts statewide—6 in Westchester County alone, Senators Jeff Klein (D-Westchester/Bronx) and Suzi Oppenheimer (D-Westchester) today announced the introduction of the School Lunch Protection Act of 2006, which enables small-city school districts to continue providing breakfast and lunch programs if voters fail to approve a school budget. State law currently prohibits any cafeteria services from being offered by these districts operating under contingency budgets.

Senators Klein and Oppenheimer were joined by City School District of New Rochelle Superintendent Linda E. Kelly, to highlight New Rochelle's highly successful cafeteria services program, which last year served 973,425 meals and provides the district with \$2.8M in revenue.

"Studies have shown that a balanced, healthy lunch is just as important as a balanced curriculum. School lunch programs are a vital and necessary expense and it's time the state treats them that way," Sen. Klein said. "New Rochelle has become a model for delivery of these services and is a case-in-point example of why we need to protect school lunch programs from budget cuts."

"I am happy to co-sponsor this legislation, which when passed will include small city school districts, such as New Rochelle, Rye and White Plains, with all other school districts statewide and will allow them to provide cafeteria services under a contingency budget," said Sen. Oppenheimer.

In 2002, recognizing that providing meals for students, especially students who rely on school lunches to meet a substantial portion of their daily nutritional needs, is an important expense for school districts and one that meets the requirements for contingent expenses, the Legislature made cafeteria services a contingent expense for all fiscally independent school districts in New York except for small city school districts. Klein and Oppenheimer's legislation would remedy that inequity for 57 school districts statewide and five districts in Westchester County—New Rochelle, Mt. Vernon, Rye City, White Plains and Peekskill.

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