



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

Statement by Senate Republican Leader Dean Skelos

DEAN G. SKELOS March 19, 2009

With just 12 days until the April 1 st budget deadline, Senate Republicans are the only ones to issue a comprehensive budget plan as an alternative to the Governor's budget.

The Senate Republican budget, which was proposed over two weeks ago, is also a better budget. We eliminate all of the Governor's tax increases, reduce state spending, restore property tax rebates, encourage job creation, and use the stimulus money to create a fair, balanced and responsible budget.

By comparison, Governor Paterson has refused repeated calls to resubmit his Executive Budget to reflect the impact of the federal stimulus money and will not conduct leaders meetings in public. In fact, yesterday the Governor told me point blank, that "you can't negotiate a budget in public and I will not do so." That is the height of arrogance.

Speaker Silver says he may introduce budget bills today that will likely increase state spending by as much as eight percent. The Speaker also contends that our economic crisis is too great to let the public know what is being discussed. The Speaker has also said that since state government is run by three Democrats, we no longer need a public budget process. The Speaker's attitude matches the arrogance of the Governor.

Senate Democrats have not proposed any budget legislation, other than a bill that would saddle small businesses, families and other taxpayers with the largest tax increase in state history, a plan that would result in the loss of thousands of jobs. Like the Governor and the Speaker, Senator Malcolm Smith has shut the public out of the budget process, favoring closed-door meetings. Again, more arrogance and more broken promises.

Senate Republicans have publicly proposed a real alternative. We proposed a budget savings plan that provides a blueprint on how to get out the budget mess the Democrats have created. A plan that would tax less, spend less and create jobs. It is incumbent on the Democrats to give us their budget plans that would do the same. New Yorkers need to be assured that taxes will not be raised, fees will not be raised and every effort will be made to create and retain jobs, not chase them away.

Senator Smith must propose a complete budget that reflects the priorities of his conference so we can have a full, open and public debate of his plan and our alternatives. Both houses must then pass their budgets so that we can begin conference committees to reconcile the differences, as Senator Smith has promised. Should Senator Smith and his colleagues fail to deliver on that promise, the public will hold them accountable.