



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

Statement By Senate Republican Leader Dean Skelos

DEAN G. SKELOS March 29, 2009

This state budget is the most fiscally irresponsible budget, produced at the worst possible time.

It's no wonder this budget was negotiated in complete secrecy, because it is a complete disaster that could push New York from recession to depression.

This budget totals about \$132 billion in spending, an increase over last year of nearly 10%. More startling is the fact that it includes more than \$8 billion in new and higher taxes to pay for the \$12 billion in new spending. At a time when we are mired in the worst economic downturn in generations, this disgraceful budget would increase state spending to unsustainable levels.

Governor Paterson, Speaker Silver and Senator Malcolm Smith are using the cover of a recession to push through the largest tax increase in state history while taking \$25 billion in stimulus money from the federal government, money that was supposed to prevent tax hikes from happening.

For several months, the Governor talked a good game about needing to reduce state spending and tighten our belts in the face of a massive deficit. However, in the end, the Governor gave in to the wishes of Speaker Silver to dramatically increase taxes and spending

and Senator Smith readily accepted the plan simply in hopes of getting it passed on time.

The end result of the most secret budget process in state history is a plan that taxes too much, spends too much and does nothing to create jobs. In fact, this budget will result in more jobs being lost, more people being unemployed and more people being uninsured.

The budget does not include any measures to create jobs. The massive personal income tax hike will hit small businesses the hardest. The \$600 million tax increase on electric and gas bills will add to the highest utility rates in the country. And businesses are already paying \$240 million more for employee health insurance as a result of the tax hike in the Democrats' deficit reduction plan.

The average taxpayer will have to pay more for property taxes because the Democrats have stolen their STAR rebate checks, which are eliminated in this budget. They'll have to pay more for bottled water, for hunting and fishing licenses, for auto rentals, cigars and beer. For parents sending their children to SUNY schools, they will be paying \$310 more for tuition, but the state will be taking 80 percent of it to balance the budget.

As the public finally learns the true impact of this disastrous, secret budget, they are going to be outraged. Senate Republicans will rally the opposition to a budget that will certainly take more money from the wallets of taxpayers and put more people's jobs in jeopardy.

As members of the Senate on both sides the aisle finally learn what is really in the budget, Senate Republicans will be offering alternatives to give Democrats an opportunity to stand up to Governor Paterson, say no to Senator Smith and Speaker Silver and make better decisions on behalf of their constituents.

If Senate Republicans were still in the majority, this budget would not be happening.

We would not allow the most fiscally irresponsible, most secret and disastrous budget in state history to be rushed through without a fight. New Yorkers have not had a voice throughout the entire budget process. And when the budget bills come up for vote, we will be speaking on their behalf.