



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Frank Padavan

Padavan Votes Against Reckless and Fiscally Irresponsible Budget

FRANK PADAVAN April 2, 2009

Calling it the worst budget process he has ever seen, New York State Senator Frank Padavan (Queens) voted against the 2009-2010 State Budget presented by Governor Paterson, Speaker Silver and Senate Majority Leader Smith. The “three men in a room” budget crafted in secret has been universally rejected and criticized by editorial boards and businesses groups across our state and by New Yorkers who have deemed the spending plan as reckless and fiscally irresponsible at a time when New York’s fiscal woes continue to grow during the worst recession since the Great Depression.

“There is absolutely no excuse for the Governor, the Speaker and Senate Majority Leader to advance a State Budget that spends too much, taxes too much and was crafted behind closed doors away from the public and state legislature,” Padavan said. “Their budget will only succeed in worsening an already gloomy economic picture for our state. No New Yorker, no family, especially middle-class families, will be spared from the real and lasting pain and challenges from this budget.”

“The angry, outrage and dismay from all New Yorkers on this budget is strong and justifiable. Middle class families and small businesses already struggling to make ends meet will only be further burdened with new and complex challenges thanks to Governor Paterson, Speaker Silver and Senate Majority Leader Smith,” Padavan said.

Following repeated days of closed door negotiations between the “three men in a room,” a \$132 billion state budget was finally unveiled to the state legislature and the public. The budget spends an astounding \$13 billion more than last fiscal year and is 9 times the rate of inflation. The budget also includes a stunning \$8 billion in total tax increases. In total, a New York City family budget will be impacted by estimated \$4,700 to \$5,000 less in their household budget annually due to this State Budget.

“These challenging times require fiscal responsibility and strong leadership,” Padavan said. “On each of these traits, Governor Paterson and the Legislative Majorities have failed at the expense of New Yorkers everywhere. Anyone who supports this budget is out of touch with reality and refuses to seek real and lasting solutions that will help middle-class families and small businesses throughout our state.”

“Over 9,000 students from Northeast Queens attend a CUNY institution, more than in any other region of Queens. Many more attending a SUNY school,” Padavan said. “This budget does not adequately provide resources to CUNY and continues the raid of SUNY tuition funds for general fund spending. At the end of the day this budget does not prepare for the future and will only lead to future increases at SUNY and CUNY at the expense of low to middle income students and their families.”

“Furthermore, this budget does not provide the resources vital to the school children of New York City. It fails to meet the promises the State Legislature has made in its commitment through CFE. For that and so many other reasons I oppose this three-men-in-a-room budget,” Padavan said.

State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, the statewide official charged with safeguarding the state fiscal health has expressed his concern over the 2009-2010 State Budget. In a statement

released on April 1, he said; “My preliminary review of the budget indicates it does not adequately respond to today’s economic realities. The budget is not a long-term solution to New York propensity to spend more than the state can afford.”

Comptroller DiNapoli further commented, “This is essentially a buy-time budget, based on a hope that the economy recovers quickly. It’s a very fragile basket to place all the taxpayers’ eggs in. Instead of using the Federal stimulus to restructure the financial plan and match projected revenue to long term growth in spending, the budget uses stimulus funds as a short-term fix. The danger is that New York could end up right back where we started, with huge budget gaps and an unsustainable level of spending.”

During the budget debate, Padavan and his Senate Republican colleagues advanced a number of amendments aimed at including common sense initiatives and removing burdensome provisions included in 2009-2010 State Budget to help New Yorkers face the economic crisis.

Among the amendments proposed by the Senate Republicans were:

- Enacting a constitutional spending cap to reign in state spending;
- Removing the dangerous and ill-advised changes to the state drug laws that will lead to thousand of felons being released from prison before the end of their sentence;
- Elimination of taxes on health insurance and utility costs;
- Restoration of SUNY tuition funds raided by Democrats with the enactment of Deficit Reduction Plan in late January; and
- Implementation of the Higher Education Tuition Investment Program which will allow parents to pre-pay tuition at SUNY and CUNY and save them from any future tuition increase.

“Each of these amendments are reflective of the needs pertinent to all New Yorkers on a myriad of issues that are important to families, students and small businesses,” Padavan said. “For all the talk of Senate Majority Leader Smith and his colleagues for working in an open and transparent manner, the sad truth is they willingly turned their back on millions of New Yorkers and walked locked step toward the enactment of budget that will have consequences for years to come,” Padavan said.