



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Winner

Winner Offers Amendment to Reform State Budget Adoption Process

GEORGE WINNER April 24, 2009



Albany, N.Y.—In the wake of a 2009-2010 state budget adoption process that continues to draw criticism from government reform advocates for its unprecedented secrecy and lack of public scrutiny, State Senator George Winner (R-C-I, Elmira) has offered a legislative amendment to require that every state budget adoption include the use of joint, bipartisan conference committees.

Under the conference committee process, various segments of the state budget are debated by committees made up of individual senators and assembly members, on a bipartisan basis, who meet in public to settle differences and negotiate compromises.

“There was a glaring lack of public scrutiny and public understanding during this year’s state budget negotiations, and it produced a bad budget,” said Winner. “The conference committee process ensures that the public gets a glimpse of who’s making the decisions and why. It makes individual legislators stand up and defend their positions. It’s good government, and it should be part of each and every budget adoption.” [Watch video.](#)

Winner has been critical of Governor David Paterson and the Legislature’s Democratic majorities for ignoring key elements of the state’s Budget Reform Act of 2007, which established legal guidelines and timetables for the appointment of joint legislative budget conference committees to conduct public budget negotiations.

“When we needed public understanding like never before, we had none,” said Winner. “That was wrong, and it produced a budget that rammed through higher taxes and threatens the upstate economy.”