



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Owen H. Johnson

Senator Owen Johnson Launches Grass-Roots Petition Drive to Restore Star Rebate Checks

OWEN H. JOHNSON May 1, 2009

Senator Owen H. Johnson and members of the Senate Republican Conference today launched a statewide, grass-roots petition drive to restore the STAR property tax relief rebate checks important to middle-class families that were eliminated by Governor Paterson's Budget supported by the Democrats. Senator Johnson voted against the Budget.

The multifaceted petition drive will utilize email and social networking sites such as Facebook, along with creation of a new on-line petition to pressure Democrat lawmakers to restore the rebate checks they eliminated as part of the recently-enacted State budget.

Senator Johnson said, "Struggling homeowners in Suffolk County deserve property tax relief now, more than ever. Families are trying to make ends meet in these tough economic times and they look forward to the STAR rebate as a way to ease the burden of sky high property taxes. The new budget places erroneous new taxes on everything from car registration to cell phone usage – the last thing we should be doing in this economic recession is eliminating this relief. Our petition drive is an opportunity for the public to tell those in Albany that the STAR rebate checks are important to their families."

The 2009-10 State budget, put together behind closed doors and in complete secrecy by three

New York City Democrats, took away the STAR rebate checks worth hundreds of dollars or more to seniors and homeowners. The checks are mailed out each Fall to help residents pay their bills or cover some of the costs associated with rising school property taxes in Suffolk County.

As part of the petition drive, Senate Republicans have created a new on-line petition that can be accessed by visiting "Iwantmystarcheck.com." Copies of the petition and a district-by-district breakdown of how much taxpayers will lose under the Democrat plan to take away their STAR rebate check are available.

Hard copies of the petition can be signed or obtained by visiting Senator Johnson's district office at 23-24 Argyle Square, Babylon, NY 11702 or at one of the soon-to-be announced community forums.

Senate Republicans initiated the STAR rebate check program in 2006 and successfully beat back efforts last year by Governor Paterson and former Governor Spitzer to eliminate the STAR rebate checks.

Senate Republican colleagues also fought Democrat efforts this year during the budget deliberations, including offering an amendment that would have restored the checks. However, the amendment was defeated when every Democrat in the chamber voted against it.

Restoring the STAR rebate checks would provide an additional \$368.64 million in desperately needed tax relief for homeowners on Long Island.

####