



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Senators Contend That Legislative Recess Is Poorly Timed

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Senators Seward and Griffo: Budget Held Hostage To Politicians' Private Agendas

With New York State facing a grave fiscal crisis, State Senators James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) and Joseph A. Griffo (R/C/I-Rome) today called for urgent, non-stop action to resolve the serious flaws in Governor David Paterson's proposed 2009-2010 state budget.

"The budget proposed by the governor in December was top-heavy with taxes and fees," Griffo said. "At a time when the people of New York are struggling in a severe economic crisis, the Governor was clearly out of touch with the needs of the people to eliminate the sales tax exemption on low-cost clothing and to propose taxing entertainment, taxing personal services such as cosmetology, taxing soft drinks, and taxing-tunes and other internet sales. His proposal to sell wine in grocery stores will lead to major negative consequences for the small liquor stores that dot Upstate communities. In short, the governor proposed a hodgepodge of bad ideas designed to make the people feel the state's pain while layers of bureaucracy within state government continue with life as usual."

Griffo called the snails-pace budget action since December "totally unacceptable" and said Paterson needs to take an aggressive leadership position.

"The budget process has been a major disappointment in a time of crisis," said Senator Seward. "We need job creation and property tax cuts now, not increased spending and billions of dollars in new taxes and fees. The message from the party in power is that schools, hospitals, small businesses and shoppers need to feel more pain. That's putting it backwards. Our schools, hospitals, and small businesses need Albany leadership to reform the budget and spending process so it is open and transparent. Instead of taking the budget behind closed doors and jamming a final product through using one-party dominance as a justification for doing what they please, we need an open budget process to reduce spending and bipartisan conference committees to work out a final spending plan that lowers taxes and creates jobs."

"The state budget process is being held hostage to the private, political agendas of three New York City leaders," Griffo said.

Seward added, "The governor says he wants an on-time budget that solves the problems of New Yorkers. Actions speak louder than words, and so far all we have had from the governor and the Democrats are words, not actions."

"Speaker Silver and Majority Leader Smith added additional legislative working days to the February calendar to accommodate the Governor's March 1st deadline. We should be working this week to reach that March 1st deadline," concluded Senators Griffo and Seward.

"In one breath, the governor now wants to wait for the final stimulus package and in another, he says that the state must act independent of the stimulus. Why set an artificial budget deadline and then ignore it?"