



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

Senator Lanza and Staten Island's Elected Officials Demand Tax Relief

ANDREW J LANZA April 24, 2009

Senator Andrew Lanza, Assemblyman Lou Tobacco, Staten Island Borough President James Molinaro, and City Council Members Vincent Ignizio and James Oddo today held a press conference to call for real tax relief to help Staten Island's overtaxed, overburdened middle-class families and small businesses, saying the state's "Tax Freedom Day" needs to arrive much sooner.

As noted by the non-partisan, independent Tax Foundation, Tax Freedom Day refers to when taxpayers have paid off their combined federal, state and local tax obligations. Nationally, Tax Freedom Day arrived on April 13, 2009. Due to its crushing combined state and local tax burden, New York's observance of Tax Freedom Day falls 12 days later, on Saturday, April 25, 2009. New York state's Tax Freedom Day is the nation's third latest, behind New Jersey (April 29) and Connecticut (April 30).

"We need real solutions, not politics as usual in Albany, to fix New York's growing tax problem," remarked Lanza. "Bipartisan solutions like strengthening STAR, enacting a real property tax cap, and reducing taxes on small businesses, will make Staten Island and communities across the state more affordable places to live and own a business."

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New York's Tax Freedom Day is one of the last to arrive in America," said Tobacco. "The reason why is simple, Staten Island residents, like residents across the state, are asked every year to hand over more money for taxes, continue to pay higher fees and tolls and see new items taxed every year. Enough is enough, the tax and spend policies of the past have crippled the state's finances, crushed middle-class families and has

made New York the least competitive state to own and operate a business. Staten Islanders need relief from high taxes now!”

“The connection between job-killing taxes and our state’s stagnant business climate is clear: when taxes rise, businesses and residents leave,” said Borough President Molinaro. “To strengthen Staten Island’s economy and help the borough recover quickly from the current economic recession, the best thing government can do is provide real and meaningful tax relief.”

“High taxes: state, city and local are severely impacting the budgets of middle-class families on Staten Island,” said Ignizio. “The fact that Americans pay more in taxes than they will spend on food, clothing and housing combined is very troubling to me. Government needs to start doing more for less in order to provide needed services, while not hindering individuals quality of life and economic freedom.”

Councilman Oddo said, “Individuals and small businesses have learned to do more with less, yet government on all levels has not. Government has a spending problem, and it continues to tax more and more to obtain its fix. As a result, New Yorkers are fleeing, small businesses are closing, and jobs are destroyed. When does it end?”

Assemblyman Tobacco added that making matters worse is that Staten Island receives little for the high taxes, tolls, fares and fees that they pay. His recent “Taxation without Transportation” bumper sticker campaign highlighted the inequality of the region’s toll system.

The elected officials noted that for the high taxes Staten Islanders pay, they receive far too little in return and added that the borough needs lower taxes and more responsive government in order to compete effectively in the 21st century economy.

According to the Tax Foundation, Tax Freedom Day answers the basic question, “What price is the nation for government?” An official government figure for total tax collection is divided by the nation’s total income. The answer for 2009 is that taxes will amount to 28.2 percent of our total income, and the stretch of 103 days from January 1 to April 13 is 28.2 percent of the year. Income and tax data are then parsed out to the states, yielding 50 state-specific Tax Freedom Days.

For more information on tax Freedom Day, visit www.taxfoundation.org/taxfreedomday/