



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

Senator Nozzolio Says Budget Wrong for New York

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO May 13, 2009

Massive Federal bailouts. Skyrocketing government spending. Tax hikes through the roof. Doubling the entire National debt in just 60 days. Growing government at taxpayers' expense.

The citizens of our State and Nation are angry and frustrated with their government, and for good reason.

Over the past three months, we have watched with horror as the State and U.S. Congress leveled record runaway spending increases; unprecedented tax and fee increases; and enormous increases in burdensome National and State debt that robs the future of our future generations.

And the newly-enacted New York State budget is a total, unmitigated disaster! I was never so certain of doing the right thing when I cast my vote against this year's State budget that spends far too much, and taxes our overburdened citizens at record increases.

At a time when all government should be focused on reform, delivering services at less cost and greater accountability, New York this next year will spend nearly ten percent more than last year's budget, and the tragic result will be the largest tax increase in state history. The Paterson-led, New York City-crafted budget raises utility taxes to the highest in the nation. And to add insult to injury, this budget was pushed through in secrecy and without public scrutiny by Governor Paterson and his Democratic legislative leaders who are all from New York City. This terrible budget increases taxes by more than \$8.5 billion to pay for an unprecedented increase in spending of more than \$12 billion.

April 15th became a day for citizens from communities all across New York State and America to express their outrage and disapproval by hosting rallies replicating the Boston Tea Party, when people took to the streets to demand a say in their government and its taxation policies.

Just a few weeks ago, I met with Sandy Parker and Brian Sampson of the group "Unshackle Upstate" to listen to their concerns and to advocate as aggressively as I could against the onerous taxes and fees that Governor Paterson had proposed in his 2009-10 New York State budget. Following the passage of the budget, Unshackle Upstate summed it all by stating, "Governor Paterson, Speaker Silver and Majority Leader Smith basically told every resident of the State that they don't care how high your taxes are, or how worried you are about your financial future, as long as they can avoid making tough decisions that might anger certain segments of the community." They continued, "the new taxes and fees in this budget are a back-breaker for taxpayers and small businesses, particularly those in Upstate."

In spite of the dire need to move our economy forward, the 2009-10 New York State budget does not include any measures to stimulate job growth or business development. In fact, the policies established in the budget make it even harder and much more expensive for job-producing business to continue their operations in New York State. Small businesses, which are already struggling to survive, are being forced to pay higher income taxes, higher energy costs, and higher health insurance costs under this budget.

As a result of the newly enacted State budget, homeowners are going to pay more in property taxes. The loss of the STAR rebate program means that hundreds of thousands of homeowners, many who have depended on the rebate check as a way to lower their overall tax burden or to make needed improvements to their homes, will have to adjust to the loss of this \$1.45 billion property tax relief program. Income taxes, utility taxes, health insurance taxes, and taxes on just about everything else that affects working class families have increased. It is estimated the State budget alone will cost the average family more than \$2,400 a year!

Under the newly enacted New York State budget, New Yorkers will pay new or additional taxes on bottled water, hunting and fishing licenses, auto rentals, and beer and wine, just to name a few. Parents sending their children to SUNY schools will pay an additional \$620 for tuition, with the revenues going directly into the general fund to pay for the liberal spending policies of Governor Paterson and the Senate Democrats and Assembly Democrats who now exert total New York City control over New York State. In addition, motor vehicle registration fees, auto insurance policy taxes and driver's license fees will all increase under the Governor's budget.

These were not the changes the citizens of our region want. That is why I voted against the New York State Budget. During the recent budget proceedings, I along with my Republican colleagues in the New York State Senate proposed over 18 budget amendments that would have reduced state spending, restored the STAR rebate program, prevented the hike in income taxes and ensured that SUNY tuition was affordable. Our amendments would also have eliminated numerous taxes and fees, including the utility tax increase.

Unfortunately, the Senate Democrats would not break ranks, and refused to join us in a bipartisan way to rise up against this spending spree and tax attack. The Senate Democrats, even the five from Upstate, failed to join us, stuck to the party line, and all voted against every one of our amendments in a totally partisan fashion.

Unfortunately, the taxpayers of New York State will feel the pain, as we lost every amendment in the State Senate by only one single vote!

At this crucial time in our Nation's history, when we face the most critical economic challenges, Governor Paterson and the New York City-led Democrat conferences in both the New York State Senate and Assembly have given us empty promises for reform.

At a time when our overburdened taxpayers need and deserve more openness, transparency, accountability and tax relief from their governments, it is sad and ironic Governor Paterson and his New York City cohorts have ushered in an era of increased behind-closed-doors secrecy and intense, destructive partisanship that is extremely costly to Upstate taxpayers.

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