



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

State Senator Liz Krueger Votes for Amendment Which Would Have Resolved Decades of Unfair Funding Formula's for NY City Schools

LIZ KRUEGER April 1, 2006

Senate Democrats Propose True Statewide Solution to

Address the Court Ordered Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) Dilemma

Albany, NY – On Friday, State Senator Liz Krueger (D-Manhattan) voted in support of a crucial amendment to the education budget bill on the floor of the Senate which, if passed, would have addressed decades of unfair school funding formula's not just for New York City, but for high needs districts across the State. Unfortunately, this proposal was rejected by the Senate Republicans who have refused to accept court orders to address the inequitable "shares" formula for school funding statewide. "Decades of under-funding and neglect have left many parts of our education system in a state of crisis," said Senator Krueger. "To address this, education advocates filed the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit thirteen years ago to force the Legislature to meet it's constitutional and moral obligations to the children of New York State. A rational education funding formula for the entire state is long overdue and the amendment proposed by the Senate Democrats would have fulfilled the goal of the CFE case by providing funds to high need urban, suburban and rural districts in every corner

of the state."

The bill that passed did provide a real victory on the capital/construction side of the ledger, with New York City receiving \$1.8 billion in capital funding in the next year, and the ability to borrow up to \$9.4 billion more for construction over the next four years, much of which will be reimbursed by the state. The Senate Democrats' proposal would have further provided \$2.6 billion in additional operating aid. This would have both fulfilled the CFE mandate, and also applied the same standards on a statewide basis.

Specific provisions of the proposed budget amendment, which did not pass, would have provided for an additional \$1.15 billion increase in operating aid for New York City schools; provided over \$580 million more in operating aid for the Big 4 School districts; dramatically increased funding for high needs rural, suburban & small city school districts; included a real "hold harmless" provision for lower needs districts, so all districts received an increase of at least 2%; placed more of the burden for increased school funding with the state -- helping to provide local property tax relief; and more fairly distributed overall school funding formulas statewide.

"The legislature's continued failure to address the Campaign for Fiscal Equity decision - especially in light of a recent ruling by the Appellate Division - leaves the entire Legislature in contempt of court," stated Senator Krueger. "Worse than being in contempt of court, we are showing contempt for students and taxpayers. It is morally, ethically and legally wrong to continue to deny access to a quality education to any child in New York State. If we had

been responsible we would have begun paying five years ago. Not only is waiting for more court action irresponsible, it ignores the needs of non-New York City school districts. A responsible solution applies the standards of the CFE decision to every district in New York State. This is exactly what the Senate Democrats are proposing."

The Senate Democrat's attempt to amend the education funding bill failed when Senate Republicans unanimously withheld their support.