



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

## Senate At Work; Hundreds Of Bills Passed

MALCOLM A. SMITH July 17, 2009

### *Economic Development & Job Creation Initiatives Mark Legislative Session*

(Albany, NY) After passing unprecedented rules reforms that fundamentally change the operation of the State Senate and open up the legislative process, the New York State Senate continued today to advance economic development and job growth initiatives. Action was taken today on hundreds of bills that benefit local municipalities and strengthen programs that will lead to the revitalization of communities across the state.

In all, legislation passed this session will spur our economy, and help workers across the state get back on their feet by creating hundreds of thousands of new jobs, and preserving hundreds of thousands more for years to come. Also, in the spirit of bi-partisanship that was missing under prior control, more bills sponsored by minority members were passed than had been in decades.

So far this year, of 698 bills passed, 171 sponsored by minority members (25%). By comparison, last year there was a total of 1,822 bills passed, but just 71 were sponsored by Senate Democrats (3%).

The Senate first returned to session last week passing more than 130 bills, including the Power for Jobs (S6031/Aubertine) program, that ensures affordable energy for hundreds of businesses across the state, securing more than 300,000 jobs.

Today, the Senate passed an enhanced “Main Street” development program (S6017/Valesky) which will help cities, towns, and villages access grants to rehabilitate and develop downtown commercial and residential areas. Previously passed by the Senate was the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (S2960B/Valesky), a program that will target reinvestment into distressed communities. Additionally, the Senate passed an extension from 18 months to 36 months for COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act) insurance benefits for people who have recently lost their jobs in order to help workers get back on their feet and find new employment (S5471/Breslin). This legislation compliments earlier legislation that extends unemployment benefits for recently unemployed New Yorkers by 13 additional weeks (S.4110A/Onorato).

“After 40 years of dysfunction, we inherited a Senate in shambles and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Moving forward with an agenda based on economic growth and job creation, the Senate Majority has taken action to keep New York on the road to economic recovery. Recognizing that Albany must change the way it does business, we passed historic and unprecedented rules reforms which demonstrate our commitment to return the Chamber to its rightful owners, the people of New York. In the days and months ahead we will continue to pass legislation that meets the needs of our constituents and restores their faith in this great body,” said Senate President Malcolm A. Smith.

Senate Majority Leader Pedro Espada, Jr. (D-Bronx) praised his Democratic colleagues for working together to pass legislation which begins to implement the comprehensive Senate Democratic Majority platform. “ Our platform focused on economic development, the creation of new jobs, providing the financing necessary for the continued development, preservation and rehabilitation of affordable housing for low-income and working class families, providing quality education for our children, healthcare for families and senior citizens and many other services to residents across the state. I was deeply honored by my

appointment to the position of Senate Majority Leader making me the highest ranking Hispanic in New York State history. I am also proud of my role in the adoption this session of the unprecedented rules reforms to open the legislative process, to make it more transparent, to empower all 62 Senators and most importantly, the 19.5 million residents of New York State. These reforms will enable us to continue to enact legislation to improve the state's economic and job development climate consistent with the Senate Democrats progressive agenda," Espada said.

Deputy Majority Leader Jeffrey Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) said, "Our principles and priorities are clear when you look at the bills we have passed this session. We came into this session recognizing that the old leadership placed politics above good policy. We focused on helping people stay in their homes, revitalizing our neighborhoods, and implementing innovative new jobs initiatives. Our work is nowhere near done, but our economy is already showing signs of improvement and I believe the legislation we've passed so far will continue to help our economy grow."

"This was a session not without its difficulties but in the end the Democratic Majority came together and passed legislation that helps all New Yorkers. I am very proud of my colleagues for their hard work on behalf of working families across the state. We will continue to do everything within our power to create jobs, lower the tax burden on middle income families, and protect our state's most vulnerable citizens," said Democratic Conference Leader John L. Sampson (D-Brooklyn).

Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida), Vice President Pro Tempore of the Senate said, "The Senate has passed significant legislation that will advance economic development priorities, create jobs and assist in community growth. Programs like the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit program will aid Upstate New York especially by creating jobs, rebuilding our urban cores and stimulating our regional economies"

“After decades without a voice, we empowered working families across the state with a legislative agenda designed to meet their needs,” said Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D-Yonkers). “We came to the aid of local governments throughout New York drowning in property taxes and for the first time in nearly 70 years, provided them with the tools to lower their tax burden while maintaining a quality of life for their communities.”

Among the other important new initiatives passed this session:

- **Bigger Better Bottle Bill** (A. Thompson) which will reduce New York’s waste stream and provide more than \$100 million to fund vital state programs.
- **Micro-Business Outreach Centers Program** (S5639/Stewart- Cousins) assisting small businesses access federal and state monies, and build an economic bridge to the broader economy.
- **Rockefeller Drug Law Reform** (Schneiderman/Hassell-Thompson/Sampson) reducing the rate of recidivism and costly unnecessary prison terms by tens of millions.
- **UB2020** (S2020/Stachowski) which will create 10,000 new long-term jobs for Western New York and create 25,000 additional construction jobs for Western New York.
- **Neighborhood Preservation Act** (S2960/Klein) which protects homeowners from suffering from a loss of property values when homes in their community are foreclosed on and not maintained.
- **Government Consolidation & Reform** (S5661/Stewart-Cousins), empowering local governments to determine the size of their government and potentially reduce the crushing burden of property taxes.