



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William T. Stachowski

Unshackle New York Praises Senator Stachowski For Empire Zone Bills

WILLIAM T. STACHOWSKI July 23, 2009

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Unshackle Upstate acknowledged Sen. William T. Stachowski (D-Lake View) for his sponsorship of two business-friendly reform measures that successfully passed in the state Senate Friday morning.

One bill (S5598) corrects and clarifies language in the 2009-10 state budget to assure that businesses that have met their obligations under the Empire Zone law are treated fairly in the recertification/decertification process. The other bill (S5575) establishes an Empire Zone task force. Made up of public- and private-sector professionals, the task force would consider changes to the Empire Zone program before it expires on June 30, 2009.

The Assembly has not acted on either measure. However, Assemblyman Robin Schimminger (D-Kenmore) is sponsoring a "same as" Assembly bill to clarify the budget language pertaining to Empire Zones.

"Sen. Stachowski and his upstate Senate colleagues should be praised for their foresight in

establishing this task force and for clarifying the language established in the budget process. Empire Zones are an extremely vital economic development tool that helps businesses remain viable and provides a valuable lure to new businesses," said Brian Sampson, executive director of Unshackle Upstate. "With tax and energy burdens that exceed national averages, New York businesses need all the help they can get to continue to compete in a global economy."

Empire Zones stimulate economic growth through tax incentives, which are designed to bring new business to the state and allow existing businesses to grow and add jobs. New York has 85 Empire Zones comprising more than 8,700 businesses. Sampson called on the Assembly to pass similar legislation so that New York can reverse the flow of businesses and people leaving New York.

These changes are certainly a very positive move in the right direction, but the state's leadership now must address other economic development initiatives such as Tax Increment Financing legislation and property tax relief, and they must allow for the authorization of financing assistance for "civic facilities" through Industrial Development Agencies.

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Unshackle Upstate is a bi-partisan coalition represents more than 45,000 employers with approximately 1.5 million workers in every region of upstate. The coalition's website www.unshackleupstate.com provides a direct way for citizens to send a message to elected officials in Albany.