



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo Gives Governor Failing Grade

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO August 12, 2009

| ISSUE: **PUBLIC ASSISTANCE**



SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR WELFARE FAMILIES GETS AN "F"

Utica - Senator Joseph A. Griffo (R,I,C,-Rome) today lashed out at the ludicrous spectacle of Gov. David Paterson doling out additional funds to welfare families to buy back to school supplies amid a state fiscal crisis.

"If you work, you get socked with higher taxes, including the new car registration fees that take effect September 1st," Griffo said. "If you don't work, you get money to buy what everyone else has to earn. This is what is fundamentally wrong with the way New York's government has been run for far too long. Not every problem can be fixed with more government spending. The federal stimulus money that Gov. Paterson is using to support this plan was designed to help transform our community and jump-start our economy, not be parceled out so that its impact is diluted. If New York State had lower taxes and less of a spend-spend-spend mentality, we would have a stronger business climate and those on welfare would be able to find jobs and afford to buy school supplies."

Griffo said that he has nothing but praise for philanthropist George Soros who has put up cash from his foundation to help low-income families buy school supplies. "Private generosity and compassion are outstanding qualities in our society," Griffo said. "However, at a time when Upstate communities who have submitted billions of dollars worth of critical shovel-ready infrastructure projects are finding their requests put on hold, it is very difficult to accept that paying for school supplies is a higher state priority than reviving communities. This is another instance where the real priorities of our state – low taxes, less spending, less government intervention and a focus on critical issues – are ignored in favor of private political agendas."

Griffo noted that the school supplies bonus is being given out just a few months after the state approved a 10% increase in the basic welfare grant given to all recipients. "We have a population that is not working that gets a bonus after being given a raise, while we have a population that is working often doing so with no raise at all," Griffo said. "The contrast between how this administration is treating the hard-working families of Upstate New York and how it is treating those on public assistance is a stark contrast in its real priorities."

Griffo also voiced concern over the payments due to the lack of notification and accountability. "New York State has just deposit \$200 in the account of its welfare recipients and is not checking to see how that money is spent," Griffo said. "Where are checks and balances? Where is the accountability? There is no guarantee that one child will benefit from this program. This is a textbook case of throwing money at a problem in an irresponsible and haphazard manner."