



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Seward Disappointed In Lieutenant Governor Court Decision

JAMES L. SEWARD September 22, 2009



ONEONTA, 09/22/09 – Senator James L. Seward today commented on The Court of Appeals decision allowing Governor David Paterson to appoint a lieutenant governor.

“I am disappointed in the Court of Appeals decision which flies in the face of lower court rulings and hands an unelected governor new power and authority not defined in our state constitution.

“Attorney General Cuomo called the appointment of former MTA Chairman Richard Ravitch ‘unconstitutional and illegal;’ sentiments I share. As Justice Pigott wrote in his dissent, the move ‘is contrary to the text of the New York Constitution and affords Governors unprecedented power to appoint a successor.’

“The issue becomes even more muddled when the governor himself was not elected to his current job as is the case with Governor Paterson. Now we have a governor, lieutenant governor, state comptroller and a U.S. Senator all serving in offices they were never elected to hold. Talk about taking democracy out of the peoples hands!

“Certainly, there is a need to establish a clear-cut method to replace a lieutenant governor when a vacancy occurs. That is one reason why I am calling for a state constitutional convention to establish a constitutional and legal process to select New York’s second in command. A constitutional convention would also allow true citizen delegates to take up important issues like a state spending cap, budget reform and mandate relief for schools and local governments.”