



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

Senate Announces Task Force on Government Efficiency

JEFFREY D. KLEIN March 2, 2010

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(Albany, NY) – Demonstrating their commitment to developing a fiscally responsible budget, the Senate Majority Conference announced the formation of a new bipartisan task force on government efficiency. Chaired by Deputy Senate Majority Leader Jeff Klein, the twelve-member task force will conduct a statewide investigation into the spending practices of state agencies and operations to uncover areas of administrative inefficiencies and government waste.

Participating in the task force will be Senators Darrel Aubertine, Brian X. Foley, Craig Johnson, Betty Little, George Maziarz, Tom Morahan, Diane Savino, Jose Serrano, Bill Stachowski, Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and Dave Valesky.

Senate Majority Conference Leader John L. Sampson said, “Years of fiscal irresponsibility have pushed our state to the brink of fiscal disaster. We will find the waste, and cut the fat to provide overburdened families with the tax relief they deserve. Driven by runaway spending practices, New York has plummeted down a steep hill toward an economy we can no longer afford. By making government more efficient and effective, we can lower costs, lower taxes, attract business and create jobs.

“Now more than ever, my goal is to protect the people's money. Together, my colleagues and I will take a good hard look at state agencies and examine spending at all levels – whether it’s excessive overtime costs or wasteful and redundant administrative practices – in an effort to find fresh ways to get New York State's fiscal house in order. I look forward to working with my colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, as we seek solutions to make government work more effectively and efficiently for all New Yorkers,” said Deputy Senate Majority Leader Jeffrey D. Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester).

Earlier this year, Senator Klein unveiled two reports uncovering massive inefficiencies in spending at the state university system (SUNY) and within the NYS Department of Correctional Services (DOCS). Last week, Senator Klein also introduced legislation (S.6885) to establish an office of Risk Assessment that would research and recommend ways to reduce insurance and damage costs related to state employees and property.

The task force will work to uncover inefficient government spending and develop solutions to put taxpayer dollars to better use, in an effort to help close the substantial state budget shortfall in Governor Paterson’s proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2010-2011. By rooting out

inefficiency, this special Task Force on Government Efficiency will recommend to the Senate ways to control government spending at all state agencies. This in turn will allow New York State to cut wasteful spending and provide vital tax relief statewide.

“Upstate New York is no stranger to overcoming adversity and doing more with less in tough times. By serving on this new committee, I am proud to be working to lessen the impact of the Governor’s proposed budget on my constituents, and on New York State as a whole,” said Senator Darrel J. Aubertine (D-Cape Vincent).

“By reducing spending and streamlining services, New York State can create significant savings of desperately needed public funds. I am proud to represent the needs and interests of Long Island on this committee, and to work with Senator Klein and my task force colleagues to deliver real solutions for New York,” said Brian X. Foley (D-Blue Point).

“After decades of excess, Albany needs to learn how to spend less and spend smart. I applaud Senator Klein for taking the initiative to form this bi-partisan commission that will root out waste and inefficiencies in our state government. I look forward to the important work that lies ahead,” said Senator Craig M. Johnson (D-Nassau).

“In today’s tough fiscal and economic times, New York State absolutely cannot tolerate the misspending of taxpayer dollars. I look forward to working with this task force and finding ways to cut wasteful spending, avoid duplication, and be a more efficient government,” said Senator Betty Little (R-Queensbury).

“I am pleased to join this diverse group of Senators to begin tackling our state’s budgetary woes. This task force will provide an unparalleled opportunity to hear directly from our state agencies and their heads about how New York State can conserve resources and reduce unnecessary and extraneous expenditures,” said Senator George D. Maziarz (R-Newfane).

“Bipartisanship is key if our state is going to continue to weather this difficult economic cycle. I am pleased to be a part of this task force’s efforts to find productive solutions to protecting and preserving vital tax dollars for New York State,” said Senator Thomas P. Morahan (R-New City).

“Before slashing vital services, we must first ensure that government is using its resources appropriately. I am proud to join Senator Klein in his fight to tackle the problem of government inefficiency,” said Senator Diane Savino (D-Staten Island).

“As we face tough budgetary choices once again this year, Senators from every corner of the state must work together to examine and analyze all means of saving money for New York and providing relief to hardworking taxpayers. In a time during which we’re enduring cuts to important programming for seniors and children, we must ensure that precious dollars aren’t lost on government waste and inefficiency. I look forward to joining my colleagues in presenting the Senate and the State with a full report on the findings of the task force regarding potential opportunities for saving, while practicing fiscal responsibility,” said Senator José M. Serrano (D-Manhattan/Bronx).

“With the budget deadline approaching, I am prepared to tackle our state’s fiscal crisis head on with this committee. I applaud Senator Klein’s chairmanship, and am proud to stand here with him today to announce our fight for greater government accountability and responsibility,” said Senator William Stachowski (D-Buffalo).

“Government inefficiency places an unnecessary burden on taxpayers across this state. Saving taxpayers money by eliminating waste, sharing services, and bringing forward new ideas for delivery of services without compromising the quality of services is a top priority for me and all of my colleagues on this committee, I am excited to announce our work today,” said Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D-35th District).

“We need to look inward at state government, find out where there is waste and inefficiency, and eliminate it now, to help close the deficit in the short term and to create a more effective and accountable structure for the long-term health of New York,” said Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida).