



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

Statement by Senate Republican Leader Dean Skelos on the Late State Budget

DEAN G. SKELOS March 31, 2010



Rather than work around the clock to get a budget done on time, Democrats in the Senate and Assembly waved the white flag and simply gave up. By doing so, Democrats sent a clear message to taxpayers that they aren't willing to stay in Albany until the last moment to get a responsible budget done on time. Their failure to get a budget done on time, and worse, to not even try, is inexcusable.

Instead of treating New Yorkers like April fools as the Democrats are doing, we owe it to every one of our constituents to work at getting a budget in place as soon as possible.

Five days ago, Senate Democrats left town without a schedule for public conference committees. They and Assembly Democrats have made a mockery of laws that require transparency and an open process, preferring to shut out the public by negotiating in secret. The General Budget Conference Committee meeting held last Friday was a farce that accomplished nothing. And no one was fooled by their cover story that members of their conference were supposedly meeting on the budget over the weekend.

Since Friday, there have been no negotiations, no meetings, and certainly no public budget discussions. Nothing. No progress at all. While I respect everyone's right to observe religious holidays, we should have been doing everything possible to get a budget in place before the deadline. Instead, the Democrats punted and ran.

The only new development on the budget was New York's failure to qualify for a single dime in federal Race to the Top money. We had the opportunity for \$700 million in revenue that could have helped our schools and property taxpayers, or averted borrowing or tax hikes.

However, the Democrats in the Senate and Assembly took no action to strengthen New York's application for round one.

We should immediately pass legislation, sponsored by Senator Golden, to raise the cap on charter schools to improve the state's chances of getting money in round two of Race to the Top so that those funds can be used to produce a budget that cuts spending and avoids tax increases, provides property tax relief, and helps businesses create new private sector jobs.

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