



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

Senator Nozzolio Blasts Senate Majority for Blocking Job-Saving Budget Extender Amendment

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO April 13, 2010

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State Senator Mike Nozzolio blasted the New York City legislators who control the Senate budget process for blocking an amendment to include much-needed construction funding in the budget extender legislation that was adopted yesterday in the New York State Senate. Senator Nozzolio's amendment would have reversed Governor Paterson's recent decision to suspend payments for ongoing State-funded capital construction projects until a new budget is in place. The amendment did not include any new spending, but would have allowed existing construction projects to be funded until April 18th.

"It is unconscionable that the Governor and Senate Democrats would use the jobs of construction employees as a bargaining chip in State budget negotiations," said Senator Nozzolio. "Cutting funding for these important projects will unfairly punish job-producing businesses and contractors during the industry's peak work season and could possibly result in thousands of layoffs."

Funding for these projects was already approved and contracts were in place to cover work through September. In an effort to demonstrate his power over the Legislature, Governor Paterson pulled funding for these contracts from his initial budget extender at the end of March. As a result, construction projects all across New York State have come to a halt and businesses engaged in construction are being used as pawns by the Governor and the Democratic-controlled New York State Senate.

Senator Nozzolio's amendment would have restored this critical funding and allowed business to go forward while budget negotiations continue.

Unfortunately, all 32 Senate Democrats voted to defeat this amendment.

"Any budget extensions that we consider should include funding for these construction contracts so that businesses can continue to operate and complete the construction projects that are essential in our efforts to create jobs and economic opportunities in Upstate New York," said Senator Nozzolio. "By refusing to consider this amendment, Senate Democrats are severely hindering Upstate New York's economic recovery."

Since April 2008, New York State has lost nearly 322,000 jobs. In February 2010, the State's unemployment rate held steady at 8.8 percent. The construction industry has been one of the hardest hit areas. According to the New York State Department of Labor, New York State lost 33,400 construction jobs between February 2009 and February 2010.

"Once again, New Yorkers are seeing the consequences of a one-party, closed door budget process that is being conducted by Governor Paterson, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and Senate Majority Leader John Sampson away from the public eye. Despite all their promises of a more open, transparent budget process, Senate Democrats have repeatedly refused to convene the budget conference committees as required by New York State law," said Senator Nozzolio.

"I am therefore calling on members of the Senate Majority to immediately begin to hold open conference committees to allow legislators on both sides of the aisle to bring the budget impasse to a resolution and allow the public to take an active role in the process. We must restore accountability to the budget process and act immediately to solve New York's budget challenges before we are the last State to recover from the recession," Senator Nozzolio concluded.

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