



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

## Property Tax Cap Needed For Real Relief

JAMES L. SEWARD April 27, 2010

| ISSUE: **PROPERTY TAX, STAR (SCHOOL TAX RELIEF PROGRAM)**

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ALBANY, 04/27/10 -- Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) today announced that a Republican-sponsored amendment that would have enacted a property tax cap and provided middle-class taxpayers with relief from soaring property taxes was defeated this week in a party line vote.

**“Last year, the state budget, which I opposed, eliminated the STAR rebate check and raised taxes by \$8.5 billion to pay for \$13 billion in new spending - taxpayers are tapped out,”** said Senator Seward. **“Unfortunately, this week’s attempt at restoring some relief was dismissed by out of touch senators.”**

The property tax cap proposal would prevent school districts in the future from increasing property taxes by more than 2.5 percent, the same as the cap currently being considered in New Jersey and that was enacted in Massachusetts. After the cap was enacted in Massachusetts, the state went from having the 3rd highest property taxes in the nation to the 33rd highest.

The amendment put forth this week would guarantee there would be no increase in taxes at the local level – since last year’s CPI is flat, school districts would immediately be limited to keeping their property tax levy lower than last year.

**“Families are struggling to stay in their homes and the biggest reason is soaring property taxes,”** Seward continued. **“The property tax cap proposal is a commonsense approach that would provide significant savings for homeowners throughout the 51st district.”**

The senate first passed a property tax cap with bipartisan support in 2008, but the assembly refused to act on the legislation. Senate Republicans also initiated the STAR rebate checks in 2007 in order to provide relief to struggling homeowners. Last year, Governor Paterson and the legislature eliminated STAR rebate checks for all homeowners, a \$400 - \$500 loss for average homeowners in the 51st district.

**“We need structural reforms that will help control property tax increases and provide mandate relief and cost savings to school districts. That’s exactly the type of reform that a property tax cap represents, and that’s why I’m fighting for this important measure,”** Seward concluded.

