



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo, Titus, Locust Grove Civic & Community Board 10 Protest Proposed Shutdown of Senior Centers

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR June 15, 2010

| ISSUE: **AGING, SENIOR CENTERS, SENIORS**



Queens, NY, June 11, 2010 – On Friday morning, June 11, NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., was joined by 35 Wakefield Senior Center members, NYS Assembly Member Michele Titus, Locust Grove Civic Association President Donna Gilmartin and Community Board 10 Chair Betty Braton, at a South Ozone Park community rally to protest threatened senior center closings during a tough economic climate and proposed state and city budget cuts. The

protest took place in front of the Knights of Columbus Hall, 135-45 Lefferts Boulevard, South Ozone Park. The nearby Wakefield Senior Center is one of those threatened with being shutdown by the NYC Department for the Aging. The United Hindu Senior Center is also located about four blocks away.

According to PlanNYC 2030, New York City's fastest growing population will be residents over the age of 65, while our number of school-age children will remain essentially unchanged. Overall, our residents will average just over three years older, a result of the baby-boomer generation reaching retirement and lengthening life spans across the city. This projected 44% increase of seniors age 65+, means we must concentrate on increasing the number of senior centers and supportive housing as we look ahead. As a result, while the city's overall projections are instructive, important differences exist between each borough. By 2030, Queens is expected to be the second most populous borough, behind Brooklyn, a result of consistent growth fueled by a mix of immigrants from more than 100 countries.

"Our seniors have worked hard and contributed to our society all their lives and they deserve safe places in their own neighborhoods to gather, enjoy hot, nutritious meals and programs like citizenship classes and health screenings, and to stay involved. Centers in Queens even speak a variety of the languages of their members. We must not let them down now that they need our support to keep their centers open. Almost 300,000 older adults use their local centers each year," Senator Addabbo stated.

Adds NYS Assembly Member Michele Titus, "The Wakefield Senior Center serves as a lifeline to many senior citizens and their families and the decision to close the center is wrong."

Community Board 10 Chair Betty Braton noted, "We're standing now in Community Board 10, where about 16% of the people living here are over 60. Today, there are only three City Department for the Aging (DFTA)-funded senior programs located in Community Board 10 to

serve almost 14,000 seniors. Closing a third of our community's senior centers is simply not acceptable.”

Bobbie Sackman, Director of Public Policy for Council of Senior Centers and Services, adds, “Seniors throughout New York City will lose their local senior center as of June 30, when 50 are proposed to be closed down by the Department for the Aging.

We are concerned that even more can be closed, as state and city cuts rain down on senior centers. We call upon the Bloomberg administration to allow senior centers to remain open for older adults who need a local center to attend for meals, socialization, health and wellness programs and social services.”

For more details, please call Senator Addabbo’s Howard Beach district office at 718-738-1111 or the Middle Village office at 718-497-1630.