



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Betty Little

Senator Little Named to Governor's Mandate Relief Team

BETTY LITTLE January 7, 2011

| ISSUE: **BUDGET**

State Senator Dean G. Skelos today designated Senator Betty Little to serve on Governor Andrew Cuomo's "Mandate Relief Redesign Team." The team will look to reduce the costly burden of unfunded mandates on local governments and school districts.

Senator Little said:

“Unfunded mandates push the financial burden down to the lowest rung of the ladder – the one occupied by the local property taxpayers,” said Senator Betty Little. “We’re talking about years and years of mandates, many well-intentioned, but collectively extremely costly. You can imagine that representing six counties, 88 towns, 2 cities and 53 school districts, I hear a lot about these mandates. I’m hopeful that given the diverse and inclusive nature of this team assembled by Governor Cuomo, and the impetus of the fiscal crisis, we will achieve some real results.”

Below is the governor's press release announcing the formation and membership of the mandate relief team:

News from New York State Office of the Governor

For more information contact: Press Office, press.office@exec.ny.gov, 518-474-8418

GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES MEMBERS OF THE MANDATE RELIEF REDESIGN TEAM

ALBANY, NY (01/07/2011)(readMedia)-- Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the members of his "Mandate Relief Redesign Team" ("Team"). The Team, established by an Executive Order announced by Governor Cuomo at his State of the State of Address, is charged with reviewing existing unfunded and underfunded mandates imposed by the New York State government on school districts, local governments, and other local taxing districts. These mandates are typically legal requirements that a local district provide a program, project, or activity on behalf of the state.

The Team includes representatives from private industry, education, labor, and government and will look for ways to reduce the costs of mandated programs, identify mandates that are ineffective and outdated, and determine how school districts and local governments can have greater ability to control expenses. The Team is chaired by Senior

Advisor to the Governor Larry Schwartz.

"The enormous burden of unfunded and underfunded mandates is breaking the backs of taxpayers, counties and municipalities across the state," Governor Cuomo said. "These mandates are throwing budgets out of balance and sending local property taxes through the roof. This diverse team of leaders and public servants fulfills the commitment to bring stakeholders to one table in order to work together to deliver relief and results for New Yorkers."

Governor Cuomo today participated in the Team's first meeting via conference call. The Team will submit a first set of recommendations to the Governor by March 1, 2011 for consideration in the Fiscal Year 2011-12 budget process.

The Team will continue its review until the end of Fiscal Year 2011-12.

The members of the team are as follows:

- Stephen Acquario, Executive Director, NYS Association of Counties
 - Maggie Brooks, Monroe County Executive
 - Peter Baynes, Executive Director of the New York Conference of Mayors
 - Sam Teresi, Mayor of Jamestown
 - Jeff Haber, New York State Association of Towns, Executive Director
 - David Steiner, New York State Department of Education, Commissioner
 - Valerie Grey, New York State Department of Education, Chief Operating Officer
 - Robert Reidy, New York State Council of School Superintendents, Executive Director
 - Kevin Casey, New York State School Administrators Association, Director
 - Timothy Kremer, New York State School Boards Association, Executive Director
 - Andy Pallotta, New York State United Teachers, Executive Vice-President
 - Steve Allinger, New York State United Teachers, Director of Legislation
 - Fran Turner, Civil Service Employees Association, Director of the Legislative and Political Action Department
 - Kevin Law, Long Island Association, President
 - Kenneth Adams, New York State Business Council, President
 - William Mooney, Westchester County Association, President
 - Micah Lasher, Office of New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg
 - Ed Malloy, Upstate Building Trades Association
 - Carol Kellerman, Citizens Budget Commission, President
 - Senator Betty Little. Senator Little was recommended by the Majority Leader of the Senate.
 - Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins. Senator Stewart-Cousins was recommended by the Minority Leader of the Senate.
 - Assemblyman Denny Farrell. Assemblyman Farrell was recommended by the Speaker of the Assembly.
 - Assemblyman Mark Molinaro. Assemblyman Molinaro was recommended by the Minority Leader of the Assembly.
- Unfunded and underfunded mandates drive up costs of schools, municipalities, and the property taxes that support them. Due in part to these mandates, New York now has some of the highest taxes in the nation. For example:

- New York has the highest local taxes in America as a percentage of personal income - 79 percent above the national average;
- New York has the second highest combined state and local taxes in the nation;
- Median property taxes paid by New Yorkers are 96 percent above the national median;
- Property tax levies in New York grew by 73 percent from 1998 to 2008 - more than twice the rate of inflation during that period;
- When measured in absolute dollars paid, Westchester, Nassau, and Rockland are respectively the first, second and fifth highest-taxed counties in the nation;
- When property taxes were measured as a percentage of home value in 2009, nine out of the top ten counties in the nation were all in Upstate New York.

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