



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lee M. Zeldin

## Joint Statement by Senators Lee M. Zeldin and Jack M. Martins

LEE M. ZELDIN February 9, 2011

“Since before we came into office on January 1st, 2011, we have had to contend, on an almost daily basis, with inquiries about state government funding which our predecessors promised local governments and non-profit agencies in our districts during this past year.

Throughout their 2009-2010 term, former Senators Brian Foley and Craig Johnson made millions of dollars in commitments for capital funding, assuring potential recipients that money was available. Even after the election, they continued to assure these organizations that they would still be receiving their money, even as the former Democrat Majority in the Senate was directing state authorities to de-fund these very same programs worth over \$12 million for the two districts. In addition, the Senate Democrats never completed the approval process for dozens of other grants worth millions of dollars more, sponsored by Foley and Johnson, even as these former Senators repeatedly told recipients that they had secured funding for their requests.

We have obtained copies of letters from December 21, 2010, when the Senate Office of Fiscal Integrity, an office created, staffed and managed by the former Senate Democrat Majority, directed state authorities to de-fund projects for the Third and Seventh Senate Districts. Their politically charged actions were grossly irresponsible, devoid of integrity, and are causing significant harm to the recipients including towns, villages, school districts, fire

districts and not-for-profits who have been deceived by their actions.

Once again, the New York City based Senate Democratic leadership have looked to Long Island as their ATM machine. Further complicating the matter has been the role of former Senators Foley and Johnson to facilitate the deception through letters, press releases, press conferences, photo captions, government mailings and word of mouth, assuring and re-assuring recipients that they secured funding even though they had not.

We have proactively reached out to all the organizations we have been able to identify who may have received funding commitments in order to set the record straight. When these groups approach Foley and Johnson for an explanation, these former Senators continue to insist that their grants are available and that it is the current Senate which is refusing to honor their commitments, contradicting the documentation which proves otherwise. The irresponsible behavior by these former members has understandably resulted in a great deal of confusion among the non-profit agencies and local governments which serve the residents of our two districts, putting important services at risk and adding to the burden on local property taxpayers.

With all of the other challenges facing our districts, local governments and state, the countless hours wasted to clean up the mess created by our predecessors and the former Senate Democrat Majority, is extremely disappointing. We will do our absolute best to further investigate the matter, but the actions of those responsible and the consequences that resulted are very real. The de-funding of the authorized projects, and the absence of Senate action on the other items have created a scenario that is deeply unfortunate. We are sorry we cannot deliver more uplifting information and we are both committed to holding accountable those responsible for this news.

At a time when people and organizations are struggling to make ends meet, these monies were promised as a life preserver only to have them yanked back."