



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Betty Little

Senator Little statement regarding 2011-12 budget adoption

BETTY LITTLE March 30, 2011

| ISSUE: **BUDGET**

“The governor presented a budget in February with the clear expectation that the Legislature would work within his framework and complete the work by the April 1 deadline. Through negotiations and the budget subconference committee process, we reached an agreement with the Assembly and governor that includes some changes that are important to many of the groups and individuals I’ve heard from during the past two months.

“These changes include a partial school aid restoration. I also succeeded in restoring approximately \$1.1 million in small government assistance for the 480/480a program for 13 school districts in the North Country.

“The new state budget includes funding for agriculture, including the Northern New York Agricultural Development program, which has proven very helpful to our farmers. The new Recharge NY Power Program passed by the Senate earlier this month and adopted in the budget will help promote economic growth.

“The Medicaid reform is a testament to the many stakeholders who approached the challenge constructively and found common ground on some sensible reforms to reduce expenses. I would hope this is the start of an ongoing discussion to make our health care system better and more cost effective.

“The final budget includes a prison system capacity reduction plan. I’ve spoken with the governor about this issue, he has acknowledged the economic impact of closing a facility on rural areas and he is committed to working with us to ensure that we approach this in a rational and fair way. Although not included in the final plan, I have also offered numerous ideas for administrative savings. Savings are needed, but we can’t compromise on prison safety.

“This year’s budget will reduce state spending and hold the line on taxes while addressing the \$10 billion deficit without resorting to borrowing or fiscal gimmicks. It’s a change in direction that most New Yorkers recognize as long overdue. I’m hopeful this budget establishes a trajectory that puts us on a more sustainable path while encouraging the job growth so desperately needed.”