



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

## Statement From Senator Krueger on SFY 2011-2012 Budget

LIZ KRUEGER April 1, 2011

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"This year, as we continue to face a struggling economy, both locally and nationally, there was no easy way to balance our State's budget. Our State government has less money and more debt, while the need for public services has only increased. New York is not alone; 44 States are facing combined budget deficits of over \$112 Billion this year. As legislators, we knew that painful cuts would have to be made to vital programs, and the only fair scenario was one in which the sacrifices were shared by all. But when the language and details of this year's budget were finally revealed, just hours before votes were cast, it became clear that this budget was anything but fair.

"Revenue that could have been used to save countless services was simply ignored and roughly \$29 billion in tax breaks, expenditures and refunds was left on the table, unconsidered. The final budget did not extend the surcharge on high income earners, even for those who have a taxable income of over a million dollars. As a result, the richest New Yorkers will receive a tax cut at the same time that public education and human service programs for poor children, the elderly and the disabled are being cut to the bone. This did

not have to be the outcome of this budget, but despite aggressive efforts by many to force a debate on shared sacrifice versus such large cuts, we were unsuccessful.

"Fortunately, there was some silver lining to the otherwise bleak budget. I am happy we were able to successfully restore money to Senior Centers, allowing them to keep their doors open; we were also able to make some restorations to school aid, construction and special education, and some critical human service programs.

"But still, too many cuts were made to those programs that are needed the most in a struggling economy. Sadly, this budget disproportionately hurt poor families, the disabled, and women and children, who statistically rely on government more than others.

"There is some solace in the fact that very difficult fights were resolved in an orderly and timely manner, but deference to punctuality should not be overly praised when so many groups and communities have lost so much. I also do recognize the needs for cuts, and voted for those budget bills that I felt implemented cuts in a responsible manner. But when it came down to it, I could not vote yes on those portions of the budget that granted reprieve to individuals and corporations that have the most, while balancing the budget on the backs of those who have the least. I therefore voted against many parts of this budget because it did not demand sacrifices from all, only some, and it was not the best we could have done."