



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## End-of-Session Message From Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR July 11, 2011

**Queens, NY, July 11, 2011 -- NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.** (D-Queens), released the following summary of the recently ended legislative session to his constituents:

The 2011 legislative session started off right - by putting the people first.

Highlighted by the passage of an on-time and balanced budget, ethics reform, a property tax cap, strengthened tenant protections and marriage equality, the legislature is on the long road to restore the faith and trust in state government. There is no question we have much more to do to create jobs and fuel our economic recovery, but with session now over, I want to reflect on the things we have accomplished together, the unfinished business taxpayers still need us to complete, and the promises some have yet to keep.

At the start of the year, many said this would be the same old Albany. Our new Governor, Andrew Cuomo, aided by a diverse coalition of experienced veterans and energetic freshmen, worked together to change how people view Albany. Governor Cuomo deserves credit for providing the strong leadership and tough medicine we needed to set the table for the economic recovery our retirees, our middle-class families and our working poor deserve. By working together, we passed an on-time budget that closed a \$10 billion deficit without any new taxes or borrowing. And we started the process of consolidating agencies to deliver a state government that works better and costs less. There was pain in the budget, but we stayed true to the principle of shared sacrifice by winning key restorations for school aid, higher education and critical human services like Title 20 senior centers, homeless programs, summer youth employment and juvenile justice reforms. It is due to these tough but true choices that New York is once again open for business. In my conversations with the Governor during the Albany session, I stressed the need to restore local funding to senior centers, social and youth programs, area schools and other credible

nonprofits or not-for-profits.

We took on Albany's ethics problem – an issue that has affected both parties in both houses and that has plagued our state government for years. Once again, led by Governor Cuomo, and with bipartisan support, we passed comprehensive ethics reform legislation that built on last year's efforts to clean up Albany and give New Yorkers the more open, accountable, and responsible state government they deserve. It was not perfect, but the stronger disclosure requirements, creation of an independent oversight commission, greater transparency for lobbyists, and tougher deterrents for public corruption are a good start to building a state government as good as the people we serve.

Our state legislature also started to deal with New York's affordability crisis. It's getting to be more apparent that too many New Yorkers can't afford to live here. By passing a property tax cap to ease the burden on homeowners, mandate relief to help our local governments, and stronger rent regulations to protect tenants, we are helping real New Yorkers stay here, work here and start their families here. Being mindful of the economic hardships most people are experiencing, including the seniors, the veterans and the disabled, we sought taxpayer relief on many levels. Recognizing that we needed to do more to protect tenants, we passed the first expansion of rent laws in almost 30 years. I wish we could have done even more to strengthen rent regulations, but our fight to achieve lasting tenant protections is not over – it has just begun. And then we ended our session with the historic passage of marriage equality.

We still have unfinished business. For those who think our work on ethics is done, I have three words for you: Campaign Finance Reform. We must do more to restore trust in government. We have to take big money out of our elections, ending pay-to-play, and give regular New Yorkers a stronger voice. We also need to do more to protect the clean water supply for 70 percent of New Yorkers, and that means preventing the immediate dangerous practice of hydrofracking near our watershed.

I urged all lawmakers to "keep your promise and pass the Pledge." I am deeply disappointed that we closed out session without keeping the promise 54 of 62 Senators made to support independent redistricting. If we don't stand by the promise we all made, the opportunity for real change will be lost for another 10 years. I urge my other colleagues in the state legislature to bring independent redistricting to the floor. It is my hope we continue the spirit of bipartisanship that allows us to meet the challenge of change and inspires New Yorkers to once again believe in New York and their government.

Personally, I am grateful the people of my district have given me the opportunity to help others and participate in our state's legislative process. During this past session, I was able to pass the following

pieces of legislation in the Senate. Some of these items are awaiting action by the Assembly or the Governor's approval.

The first, **S.1242**, passed on June 2. It would include the use of a governmental agency to harass a person within the crime of aggravated harassment in the second degree. It currently is awaiting passage in the Assembly. Assemblyman Mike Miller is the prime sponsor in that house.

The next, **S.1247**, passed the Senate on March 7. It relates to sex offender registry check for certain employers, and would prevent employers from hiring sex offenders and child abusers for positions in which they would have substantial contact with children. The bill is in the Assembly's Labor Committee and is also being carried by Assemblyman Miller.

**S.1271**, which passed on June 15, would increase the penalties for driving with a suspended or revoked license by changing monetary amounts and jail sentences for violations in the third-, second-, and first degrees. The bill is in the Assembly's Transportation Committee and is being sponsored by Assemblyman Dennis Gabryszak.

**S.3300** passed the Senate on June 22. It would prohibit the use of digital license plate frames which are capable of producing still or scrolling texts or images. It is perceived that digital license plate frames distract other motorists from driving. It is being carried by Assemblyman Miller and is in the Assembly Transportation Committee.

Finally, **S.5022-A**, which passed the Senate on June 22, would include falsely soliciting for property within the crime of scheme to defraud in the second degree.

Perpetrators who falsely misrepresent an organization and ask for donations will be subjected to a Class A misdemeanor. I am currently working on obtaining an Assembly sponsor.

I wish all my constituents a happy, healthy and safe summer.

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