



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie's Mandate Relief Working Group Hold First Meeting

PATTY RITCHIE October 7, 2011

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### **Panel Looks for Ways to Reduce Burdens on Property Taxpayers**

State Senator Patty Ritchie said her Mandate Relief Working Group, a team of local leaders who are tasked with finding unnecessary and wasteful state requirements that cost local taxpayers' money, held its first session Thursday evening.

"Too often, Albany creates extra costs for rural areas because they are unaware of what their one-size-fits-all rules mean for upstate communities," said Senator Ritchie. "This year, I made cutting the cost of government and reducing mandates a priority, and my Mandate Relief Working Group will help me accomplish this goal by attacking the problem from the ground level, finding waste, and rooting it out."

"If we are going to help communities find ways to save money, we need to look at out of date mandates, and requirements that create extra burdens on schools, towns, municipalities and county governments."

Senator Ritchie already has made strides in battling unneeded mandates. This year's budget cut mandates in Medicaid, law enforcement, local government and education. And the Legislature also eliminated \$127 million in outdated mandates on school districts and county governments.

Additionally, Senator Ritchie voted to create a joint commission, with members appointed by the Governor and leaders of the Legislature, to identify wasteful mandates and abolish them. Senator Ritchie's Mandate Relief Working Group will send its findings to that commission for review and further action.

Members of Senator Ritchie's Working Group include co-chairs Justin Taylor, the Clayton Town Supervisor, and St. Lawrence County Legislator Kevin Acres of Madrid, as well as ex-St. Lawrence County Legislature Finance Chair Peter FitzRandolph of Canton, Jefferson County Legislator Scott Gray, Fulton City Schools Superintendent William Lynch, Village of Lacona Mayor Peggy Manchester, South Jefferson Central Schools Superintendent Jamie Moesel, Oswego Town Supervisor Vicki Mullen, and Heuvelton School Board President Jack Zeh.

The group's next meeting is scheduled for Oct. 27.