



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

## Senator Martins Meets With East Hills Seniors

JACK M. MARTINS    October 13, 2011

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Senator Jack M. Martins spent an afternoon with the East Hills Seniors at East Hills Village Hall. Senator Martins was invited to speak by the village's Senior Activities Committee. After giving a short presentation on his first legislative session in Albany, the seniors were ready with their questions and they fired away.

Much of the discussion involved the finances of the state as well as local governments and school districts and how they impact residents who are facing ever increasing costs. This past legislative session, the state legislature and Governor Cuomo instituted a 2 percent property tax cap to slow the rate of tax increases. Property tax increases have gone up significantly in the past 10 years. In the 10 year period from 1998 to 2008, local property taxes grew in New York State by 78 percent.

Senator Martins voted in favor of the tax cap and he outlined his reasons for doing so to the East Hills Seniors. "The growth of property taxes, especially here on Long Island and in Nassau County, was unsustainable. In these difficult economic times, families have had to do more with less. Government has to do the same," he said.

Another member of the group asked about the pension system for public employees. Those in the private sector have retirement plans that include a defined contribution while those in the public sector, including government and school district employees, have a defined benefit plan. Senator Martins said he expects the pension system to be looked at during the next legislative session.

The group addressed a myriad of issues including a bill that Senator Martins supported that limits protests at military funerals. Senator Martins stated that while he respects First Amendment rights, a family of one of our fallen heroes deserves to mourn with dignity and respect without interference.

The East Hills Seniors and Senator Martins then engaged in a thoughtful discussion on potential legislation that the Senator is looking into. "I want to thank the East Hills Seniors and the Village of East Hills for having me. I was glad to have answered any questions they may have had. These residents also help me in my job since it gives me the opportunity to learn about their concerns, thoughts and insights. The residents had some great ideas that we will be looking into," Senator Martins said.