



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

## Senator Flanagan Discusses The Issues With Residents During Community Meeting Series

JOHN J. FLANAGAN February 16, 2012

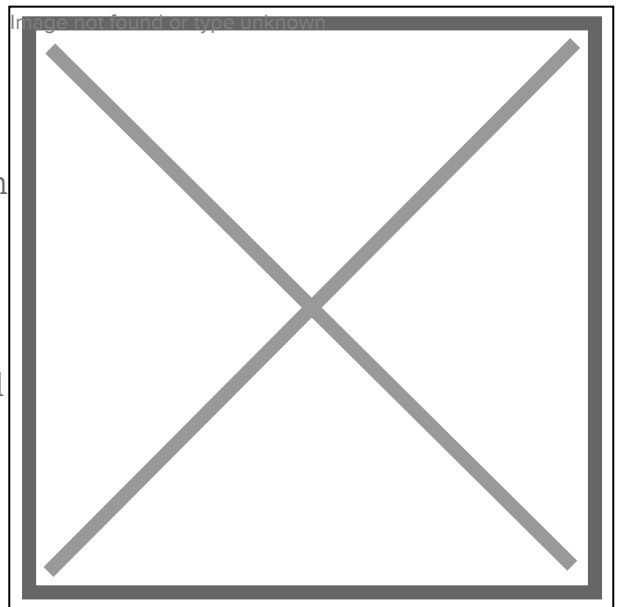


To give residents an opportunity to provide their input on the issues facing New York State, Senator John Flanagan (2nd Senate District) recently hosted a series of Town Hall meetings throughout the region. The meetings, which were held at the Smithtown Library in Nesconset, the Half Hollow Hills Public Library in Dix Hills and the Middle Country Public Library in Centereach, gave community members an open forum to publicly speak about the subjects important to them.

To open each of the meetings, Senator Flanagan gave a quick update on the ongoing budget negotiations and an overview of his efforts to make sure that the issues facing Long Island residents were being addressed in Albany. Most importantly, according to Senator Flanagan was to build on the important victories that were achieved last year by working with Governor Andrew Cuomo, including the implementation of the property tax cap and the historic cuts that will make personal income tax rates for middle-class taxpayers in New York State the lowest they have been in more than 50 years.

"While budget negotiations are always somewhat contentious, I am confident that based on the cooperative and fruitful efforts of last year, we will see significant progress in providing New York families greater tax relief. The reality is that our families need relief and it remains my number one goal," stated Senator Flanagan.

After his brief opening remarks, Senator Flanagan then opened up each event for a discussion with those in the audience. This led to a lively discussion of a multitude of issues including the effects of the property tax cap, the issue of funding school districts within the constraints of ongoing financial issues at the state level and how to meet the needs of the students in the community.

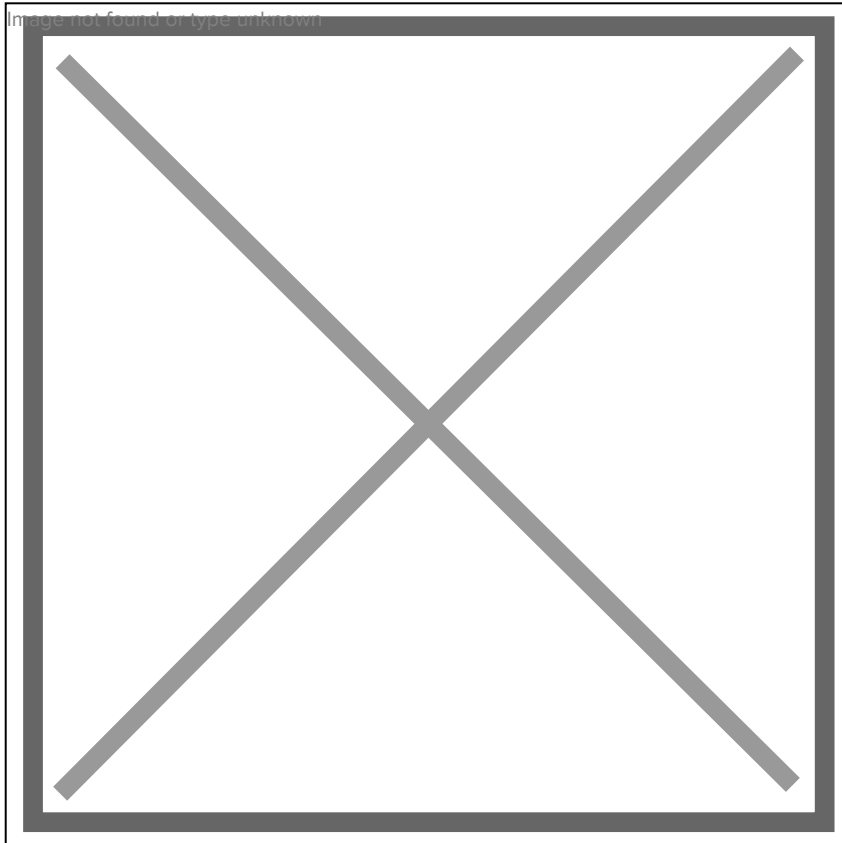


At the events, many of the comments and questions from the audience concerned tax relief and the concerns of the working families who call Long Island home.

There were also many in the audience who were interested in Senator Flanagan's role as the Chairman of the Senate Education and his efforts to protect the educational future of Long Island's school children. During this discussion, Senator Flanagan once again reiterated his

belief that education must remain the highest priority of New York State government and his belief that quality teachers are essential in that process.

Senator Flanagan, who has been a proponent of increased funding of area schools and a constant leader in the fight to get Long Island's fair share of education funding, continued to pledge to work with the school districts as he has continually done since he was first elected to public office.



At the Centereach meeting, he spoke to 10-year old Kristina Salzman who was concerned about the future of programs as she enters middle school in the Middle Country School District in the near future. Senator Flanagan let her know that he believes these after-school activities help students learn and that he himself was a better student when he participated as a youngster.

But he also stressed to the audience that the financial realities of the state are clearly different than they were just a couple of years ago and that part of the process must be to use the money available more effectively for the betterment of the children who are in our schools.

Residents who were unable to attend one of Senator Flanagan's meetings and would like to share their input on any state matter can send Senator Flanagan an e-mail at [flanagan@nysenate.gov](mailto:flanagan@nysenate.gov) or call his office at 631-361-2154 at their convenience.

Senator Flanagan also has posted a [survey on his web site at flanagan.nysenate.gov](https://www.flanagan.nysenate.gov) to get residents thoughts on a variety of subjects facing New York State.

“It is so important for everyone who has the privilege of holding elected office to listen to those they serve and I thank all those who attended these meetings for taking the time to share their feelings with me. This give-and-take will help me when I travel to Albany to fight for the things that are important to our families and our community,” said Senator Flanagan.