



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Your Turn: Submit Your Ideas for Mandate Relief

PATTY RITCHIE March 12, 2012

| ISSUE: **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**



**\*\*\* [CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT YOUR IDEAS](#) \*\*\***

*What are you doing to cut my taxes?*

It's a question I hear at almost every stop I make, whether a community meeting, at the front door of one of the thousands of constituents I meet every year, or even while shopping for groceries for my family.

And it's a critical one. Lowering taxes not only brings relief to hardworking families and individuals who live here and pay the bills, it also helps to make our state and region more attractive to businesses that want to come here and create more jobs that we desperately need.

New Yorkers pay some of the highest taxes in the nation, partly because Albany has saddled local governments and schools with rules and burdensome regulations that drive up the cost of providing services.

So what am I doing to help?

Last year, I voted, along with other members of the Assembly and Senate, to wipe away a number of outdated mandates, and provide savings of \$125 million a year to counties, towns and villages.

As part of 2011 state budget, which reduced total spending for only the first time in 15 years, I also voted to rein in runaway Medicaid costs—by far the biggest “mandate” on local taxpayers. That one step will provide billions of dollars in savings, and help keep budgets balanced for years into the future.

And because mandate relief is an ongoing challenge, I voted to create a special statewide Mandate Relief Council, headed by Lt. Governor Robert Duffy, to identify more ways to save money for local taxpayers.

The Council recently held a public hearing in Watertown, where I joined with other legislators and top state officials to listen to ideas from our local representatives from

Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties.

I went a step further than most other members on the Council, and presented more than two dozen recommendations from a special group of local citizens that I formed to name some mandates that are especially irksome to communities in this area.

I invite you to submit your ideas as well. I've created a place for citizens to submit proposals for mandate relief. I will review all of the recommendations received for possible legislation, and forward the best to the statewide Council for possible action.

**\*\*\* [CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT YOUR MANDATE RELIEF IDEAS](#) \*\*\***

Cutting mandates on local governments is critical to our efforts to get New York's spending and taxes under control, and get our state economy back on track. I hope you will take the time to visit my website, and share your ideas.