



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Senator Addabbo's Statement on Breakdown in Transparency and Good Government in Senate Legislative Session

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR March 19, 2012

Queens, NY, March 19, 2012 – NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., released the following statement following the critical Senate legislative session last week:

Regrettably, democracy and the voice of the people across the state were silenced in Senate Chambers on March 14, 2012 with the closed-door negotiations and a premature halt to the floor debates on crucial bills before the Senate body. Therefore, I refused to take part in a Senate session after a motion passed the house that prohibited Democratic Senators from openly discussing and debating legislation regarding redistricting, the critical process that determines our people's voice in government that happens only once every 10 years after a census is taken.

Once again, the legislative leaders of our state government showed that as much as we want to change the way Albany conducts its business, the more it stays the same. The closed-door negotiations, lack of transparency, dysfunction and the unwillingness to hear debate that has plagued Albany for decades was witnessed again by the entire state. Some here say it was business as usual.

It did not have to be that way. This year, our legislative leaders had the opportunity to provide real reform and honor a pledge to remove legislators from the process of determining their own district lines. They failed. Instead, late in the evening behind closed doors, the legislative leaders not only agreed to their own State district lines, after failing to agree on Congressional lines, but they also tried to convince the public that legislation regarding pension reform, gambling, DNA collection and teacher evaluations are related to the legislation and negotiation of district lines. They are not related.

I also disagree that these pieces of legislation had to be extremely rushed and put to a vote on March 14 around midnight. Only legislation that truly has a time issue should qualify

for a Message of Necessity from the governor to be voted on the same day as introduced. I see no valid reason why these bills, some over 80 pages long, did not follow the normal process for legislation which calls for a bill to be voted on three days after its introduction, to allow for interpretation and discussion. There were no committee discussions and no public notice. It was wrong.

The State Legislature still has important legislation to consider in the coming weeks, namely our State Budget. I intend to promote the need for transparency, public input and professionalism in addressing the fiscal issues of our state and the needs of our people.

#