



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John L. Sampson

## Senate Republican Conference Votes Down Six Pieces of Legislation Which Would Provide Aid and Opportunities to New Yorkers

JOHN L. SAMPSON April 3, 2012

| ISSUE: **EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH, HIGHER EDUCATION, IMMIGRATION**

*Health Care Exchange Legislation Would Ensure Better Insurance Options and Protection for Many Currently without Coverage*

*DREAM Act and Increased Foundation Aid Would Provide Greater Access and Resources for New York's Education System*

*Three Democratic Proposals Would Offer New Yorkers with Tax Relief and Job Creation Opportunities*

(Albany, NY) The New York State Senate Democratic Conference today took action on the floor of the Senate to provide New Yorkers with greater access to education and health insurance, as well as tax relief and job creation opportunities. These bills continued the Democratic Conference's ongoing efforts to protect the rights and dignity of all New Yorkers, not simply the interests of the wealthiest few. The six pieces of the legislation introduced by the Senate Democrats were all voted down by the Senate Republican Majority.

"Today's votes should remind New Yorkers that the Senate Republican Conference is more interested in scoring political points and pursuing the support of radical Tea Party-activists than providing real relief and benefits to our state's residents," Conference Leader Senator John Sampson said. "Instead of working in a bipartisan fashion to give increased access to education and health insurance, provide job creation opportunities to small businesses and grant tax relief to the state's residents, the Republicans chose to vote against the interests of

hard working New Yorkers. They should be ashamed of themselves and they must be held accountable.”

## **Health Care Exchange**

In order for New York State to opt into the federally-funded program created by the Patient Recovery and Affordable Care Act, Health Care Exchange legislation must be passed. The program focuses specifically on uninsured individuals as well as small businesses who would otherwise not be able to offer insurance to their employees. If no action is taken before January 1, 2013, the federal government will establish and implement an exchange for New York, removal the ability for state government to impact the program.

“This state does not need a radical tea party agenda pushed by the Senate Majority Conference, what we need is a Health Care Exchange to provide insurance coverage for hard working New Yorkers and their families,” Senator Breslin said. “The Governor should not be forced to utilize his executive authority to create such an exchange. Therefore, I call on my Republican colleagues to end their intransigence and fulfill their obligation as legislators.”

## **Education**

### **DREAM Act**

The New York State DREAM Act taps into the historical principles of our state, including freedom and opportunity, as it would provide access to state financial aid programs, including grants, loans and scholarships for undocumented youth in New York. Specifically, the New York State Dream Act will eliminate potential obstacles to obtaining financial aid and extend the opportunities for certain immigrant students to attend higher education institutions throughout New York State.

“Today, the Senate Republicans yet again closed the door on thousands of New Yorker’s whose only dream is going to college but can’t afford it and are denied financial help solely because they are immigrants,” Dream Act sponsor Senator Perkins said. “This is more than simply easing access to quality education, this is about ensuring that the next generation of New Yorkers has the education necessary to serve as economic drivers for our state.”

### **Foundation Aid**

The Senate Democratic Conference has always been a strong believer that education funding is essential to fostering a durable and prosperous economy. Restarting Foundation Aid at an increased level will go great lengths in assisting high-needs school districts and ensuring that the necessary funds are available to give our children the best education.

“Over the past two years, New York public schools have lost dramatic funding, forcing school district to eliminate thousands of teaching positions and reduce or eliminate quality educational programs,” Senator Stavisky explained. “Through restarting and increasing Foundation Aid New York State would have fighting chance at closing the current education gap and providing those who are educating our youth the proper resources they need to succeed.”

## **Tax Relief and Job Creation**

### **Medicaid Relief for Local Governments**

The Senate Democratic Conference has been advocating for Medicaid reform to provide tax relief for New York’s localities, as well as New York City. This legislation would represent the single-largest mandate relief initiative in the history of New York State and would result in crucial property tax relief. This proposal would provide a total of \$42 billion in savings to counties and New York City over a ten-year period beginning in 2015-16 and ending in 2024-25, and \$7.6 billion in local savings annually.

“Ensuring Medicaid relief for localities is vital to reducing the tax burden on New Yorkers, many of whom continue to live pay check to pay check.” Senator Krueger said. “We in state government must ensure that as many of our state’s residents continue to struggle financially the essential services they require are provided without causing added burdens to the tax payers. This phased takeover of Medicaid administration expenses would achieve that goal.”

### **Small Business Revolving Loan Fund**

New York State’s Small Business Revolving Loan Fund is targeted to businesses that have had difficulty accessing regular credit markets and offers micro-loans and regular loans depending on need. Though the state economy has begun to show signs of improvement, the credit market, especially for small businesses, continues to be restrictive. The additional \$25

million the Senate Democratic Conference seeks to provide to the Small Business Revolving Loan Fund would dramatically improve the fund's ability to help small businesses hire more New Yorkers.

"Small businesses are at the heart of New York's economy and their prosperity is directly linked to our state's economic strength," Senator Hassell-Thompson explained. "Through the Revolving Loan Fund, we will provide small businesses with access to affordable capital so they can do what they do best – innovate and grow. The Senate Democratic Conference is committed to ensuring that these entrepreneurs have access to the capital they need to survive, thrive and put more New Yorker's back to work."

### **Senior STAR Rebate Program**

The Senate Democratic Conference understands that real property taxes are a serious burden for many seniors with limited, and fixed incomes and that school taxes represent a substantial portion of the taxes homeowners pay. That is why the Conference has continued to push for the Senior STAR Rebate program, which would give additional help to senior homeowners with limited incomes who are struggling to afford to remain in their homes.

"Senior homeowners are counting on state government to provide them with the tax relief they require during these economic times and this measure would help achieve that goal," Senator Hassell-Thompson said. "These homeowners, often on fixed incomes, have been regularly called upon to shoulder ever increasing tax expenses. The Senate Democratic Conference understands that we must do as much as possible to ease those burdens, and we call on the Senate Majority to join us in achieve those results."

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