

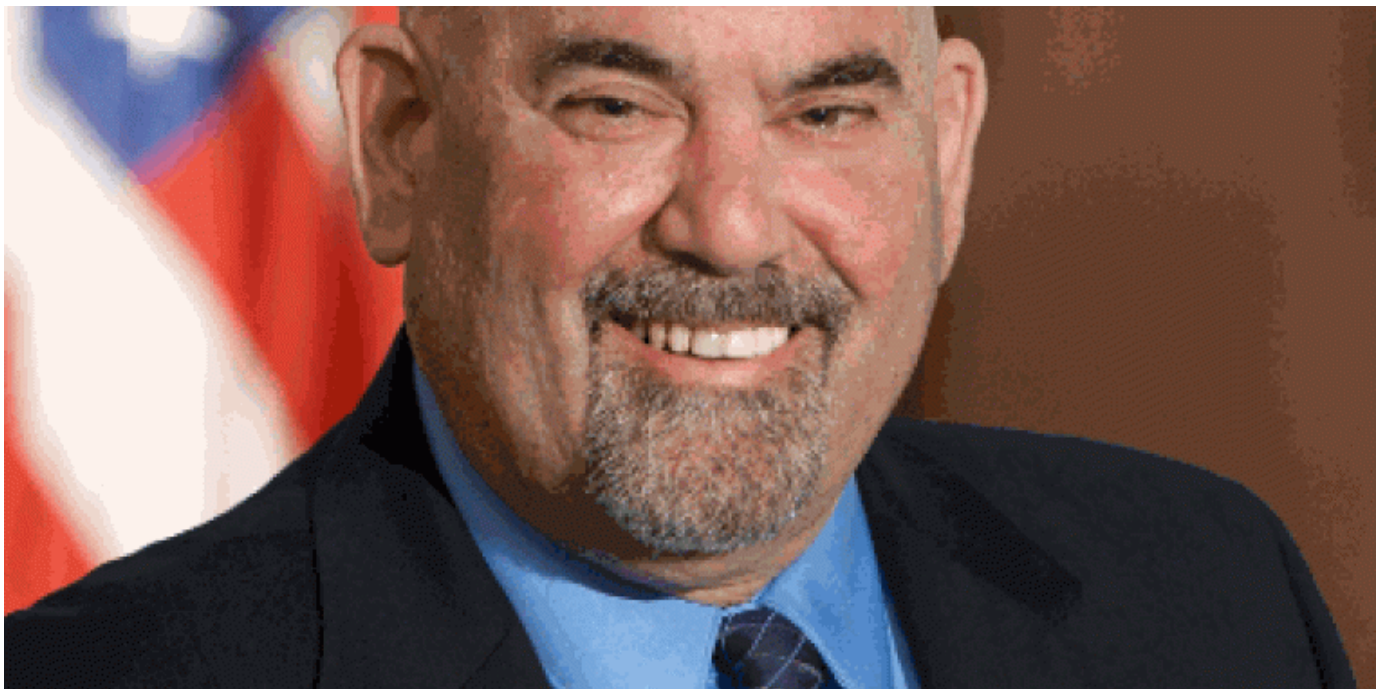


NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

Statement From Senator Flanagan Regarding Passing of Assemblyman Conte

JOHN J. FLANAGAN October 18, 2012



This week, Huntington lost a true leader and New York State lost a very valued public servant. For me personally, I lost a great colleague and more importantly, a dear friend. Jim Conte passed away after a long battle with cancer. Throughout that period he endured many physical challenges, but he never wavered on things that were important to him, especially his family.

As an Assemblyman, Jim was a Huntington Station man to his core. He always remembered where he came from, who his constituents were, and how he had a responsibility to watch out for them. Jim grew to achieve senior positions in the New York State Assembly because of his experience, because of the respect he earned from both Democrats and Republicans and because he demonstrated a continued ability to stay focused on protecting his constituents and the taxpayers of the State of New York.

He had many significant legislative accomplishments throughout his twenty-five years of service, the most notable of which was his passionate work on organ donation and transplant issues. He was clearly viewed as an expert because of the time and energy he devoted to these issues and, of course, because he was a two-time kidney transplant recipient. As a legislator, Jim cared much more about getting things done than

being in the limelight. He accomplished many good things for people in his own understated way. I know this because I got to see it firsthand.

When you lose a close friend, especially when your friend has suffered, it makes you take stock of many things. Jim taught me about keeping things in perspective. He was famous for making the point that you shouldn't sweat the small things. He lived his life with humility and respect for others -which was inspirational even when he didn't know it. And most important, he was incredibly dedicated to his family. They were his rock and the foundation of everything that was important to him.

Simply put, Jim Conte taught me a lot more about how to live a good life than he did about the legislative process and for that I will always be grateful. I personalize this statement because when you work in government as an elected official, particularly over an extended period of time, you meet many people and acquaintances.

True long-term friends are somewhat rare which is why they are extra special. Jim Conte was a proud accomplished public servant for which he deserves praise and accolades. To me, however, he was more of a friend than a colleague. I mourn his loss for the people he represented and because I will just miss being his friend. He is in a better place and I wish his family peace and comfort through this very difficult time.