



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. Statement on Governor Veto of Otb Retiree Bill December 19, 2012

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I strongly disagree with the Governor's veto of the OTB retirees benefits bill. When these retirees took employment with the New York City OTB, they did their jobs, paid their taxes, raised their families, contributed to our economy and had every expectation they would continue to receive the health coverage promised to them. That all ended when the OTB went bankrupt, leaving some 1,000 dedicated former employees with a broken promise and no health care coverage. It was a travesty then, and it's a travesty now.

Some of these retirees are now paying thousands of dollars out of pocket for private health care coverage, often exceeding their pension payments. Others are simply going without health care, which should cause a greater health care concern for the state. I am deeply saddened that this legislation, which would have provided a desperately needed solution for these retirees, has once again failed to clear the Governor's desk.

In both the New York City Council and the New York State Senate, I have been in the position to make very hard decisions in the face of serious economic downturns. Right now, in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, our economy has clearly taken another beating, which is second only in its seriousness to the utter devastation suffered by the storm victims, many of whom live in my district.

However, even during our worst fiscal times, I and many of my colleagues in government tried our best to spare our most vulnerable residents from further harm when we were charged with making tough choices to address our economic woes. The OTB retirees fall into that category and they need and deserve our help.

While I am greatly disappointed that the OTB retiree legislation has been vetoed, I will continue my efforts to ensure that this issue is dealt with in our state budget, so that our state can honor its promise to these retirees.