



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## From the Desk of Senator Jack M. Martins- The Power Washer Approach

JACK M. MARTINS April 29, 2014

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So I somehow blew up my brother-in-law's power washer last week. I don't know how it happened, but you know the feeling. You try never to borrow anything but when you finally do, not 20 minutes in, the otherwise indestructible machinery that's been well-used for 15 years suddenly and inexplicably starts sputtering and belching smoke like a wounded Godzilla.

It's a shame too. I was trucking right along, smoothly blasting away muck and grime and basking in the glow of my rejuvenated siding when I suddenly heard a bolt blow clean off the side of the machine. So my meticulously planned three-hour task turned into a full-day excursion as I headed to the Home Depot to educate myself on the wide world of power washers (thanks Tom!) and where I bought new ones for both my brother-in-law and myself. Lesson one: better not to borrow anything expensive, for Murphy's Law will surely intervene.

But that old adage aside, my column is actually about the process. If you've ever used a power washer you know how strangely satisfying the experience can be. To be sure, it's slow and tedious work that requires careful attention so as not to let the water's force damage what you're cleaning. But as you progress inch by monotonous inch, you're rewarded with a

renewed surface gleaming back at you. And if you're like me, you occasionally power the washer down to step back, admire your work, and reassess the details of your approach.

In reality, this is precisely how so many of life's challenges have to be managed. I think power washing might be the perfect chore by which to teach our teenagers the value of slow and sustained effort. It's also what came to mind this past week as I spoke at the WOR Business Breakfast at the Jericho Terrace. As the newly appointed Chairman of the Senate's Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business Committee, I was invited by WOR and CNBC contributor Ron Insana to speak with more than 100 local business owners about the business environment and what's being done to help it flourish.

I asked Richard Bivone, Nassau Chairman of the Long Island Business Council and Nick Terzulli, Director of Business Development at the Nassau County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) to join us. The session immediately took off because our hard-nosed, passionate business owners have no problems telling you what needs improvement. But that's the kind of honest discussion that has been lacking in New York's business policy-making for far too long. In the past, officials took businesses for granted and let New York City special interests dictate the discussion.

I think we all agreed though, that we're finally turning that corner. In just the past four years we've delivered on-time, balanced budgets with no business or personal tax increases. We cut personal income taxes to their lowest level in over 50 years, kept state spending to less than two percent growth and even established a real property tax cap. In essence, we've maintained state finances much as a successful business would maintain its own.

But we also agreed that we have to strike while the iron is hot and incentivize existing businesses to stay, while convincing new ones to open in New York. That simply can't be done until we tackle New York's notoriously excessive regulations. I've already reviewed

thousands of pages of what appear to be ambiguous and often duplicative regulations, but untangling this mess, with an eye toward simplification is very appealing to me. Much like the power washer, it's slow and steady work, taken inch by painstaking inch. The reward will be a much improved and attractive business environment that's better for all working people.

Yet, I know I'll need help. I'll be hosting a series of Senate hearings where business people can share their insights and expertise. Just like this week's WOR breakfast, the more frank the discussions, the better. In the meantime, I urge any small business or would be start-ups to reach out to the Long Island Business Council (516-396-0600) and the Nassau IDA (516-571-1945). They have a wealth of resources that many people just aren't aware of, as well as invaluable advice, garnered from years of collective experience. These are business people just like you, and they're dedicated to helping in whatever way they can.

So break out your power washers (be sure they're not borrowed) and together, let's get to work.