



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas P. Morahan

STATE SENATE PASSES SWEEPING LEGISLATIVE REFORMS

THOMAS P. MORAHAN July 16, 2009

I'm very pleased that the Senate has passed the most significant, sweeping legislative reforms in its history. The beneficiaries of those changes are the people of this state. As result, the Senate will be more open, transparent and accountable.

Each and every member of the Senate will now be empowered by these reforms. Every Senator will be treated fairly and given equitable resources to ensure they can effectively represent their constituents.

The days of legislative leaders dominating everything that happens in Albany is over.

What does this mean for the people? It means that powerful political bosses can no longer stop a bill that is important to my district. It means more resources will be available to me to respond to important needs and projects in our community.

Under these reforms we have made major changes to strengthen the committee process to encourage more debate and give committee chairs and members more authority to vote on legislation and move it to the floor of the Senate for action. And we have placed eight year term limits on leaders and committee chairs.

The reforms will result in more sunlight on the actions of the Senate, through more public information, more webcasts of Senate proceedings and a CSPAN style broadcast network.

We need to make sure that the Senate operates under a fair, bipartisan model that New Yorkers can be proud of. While we have taken a dramatic step forward, there is still much more we can do.

For the first time ever we have diluted the power of leaders to decide the fate of bills or control the resources available to rank-and-file members.

These major reforms will allow Democrats and Republicans to work together for the common good, not just for the good of one party, one interest group or one geographic region of this State.

These reforms are a major step towards restoring the public's faith and confidence in the Senate and will enable us to operate in a more open, efficient, effective and accountable manner for the benefit of everyone in New York.