



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John A. DeFrancisco

Letter to the Editor Regarding STAR

JOHN A. DEFRANCISCO October 7, 2009

| ISSUE: **BUDGET**

Dear Editor:

I read with great interest the article, “Star Tax Relief Loses More of Its Luster” in the October 5, 2009 issue of your paper, which discussed the Legislature’s reduction of star benefits and the elimination of star rebate checks. In the article it was stated that the “Legislature quietly” took these actions. In fact, the actions were not taken by all Legislators and some Legislators were anything but quiet about it.

During the public hearings, as the Republican Ranking member on the Finance Committee, I spoke loudly, as did my Republican colleagues, about how short-sighted it was, at a time where the economy was in bad shape, to in effect raise property taxes. It seemed contradictory for the State of New York to take money out of the pockets of taxpayers by reducing star benefits, taking away star rebate checks, and increasing fees and taxes while at the same time the Federal Government was distributing billions of dollars of stimulus money.

Despite these sound arguments of the Republican Minority members; the three New York City Democratic leaders Governor David Paterson, Senate Majority Leader Malcolm Smith

and Speaker Sheldon Silver went behind closed doors and crafted a budget that reduced star benefits, took away star rebate checks and increased taxes and fees.

During the budget debate, after the ill conceived budget was crafted behind closed doors, my Republican colleagues and I argued against and then voted against each of these measures. Both Central and Northern New York Democrat Majority Senators David Valesky and Darrel Aubertine, followed their New York City Democratic leadership like lemmings and voted for each of these measures.

The reductions in Star, the elimination of rebate checks and tax and fee increases were not “quietly” passed but were adopted over the strong and loud objections of my Republican colleagues and myself.

So it is both unfair and misleading to lump all “Legislators” together as having quietly passed these destructive measures.

Very truly yours,

John A. DeFrancisco

New York State Senator