



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

From the Desk of Senator Jack M. Martins

JACK M. MARTINS December 30, 2016

So I have this old pair of boots that I use when I do any work on the house or in the yard. They're ancient, tattered – embarrassingly so – but they're comfortable. My wife, Paula despises them and wants them to go away. Now logically I know she's right but despite her pleading, I can't seem to throw them out. She says it's because I can't give up on anything...and I think she's right.

In that light, the final days of 2016 are upon us, a time to reflect on the past while looking optimistically towards the future. For me personally, December 31st also marks the end of my time in the State Senate, having opted not to run for reelection in order to pursue other opportunities. At this juncture I don't think there's anybody who hasn't heard the news but just in case you haven't: I ran for Congress this last campaign, but the position went to former County Executive Tom Suozzi. I wish him success and hope you will as well.

But back to this bittersweet moment. Saying goodbye to something or someone you love is never easy, but there are many fond memories to look back on of great work done with great people to further great causes. We didn't win them all, but we never stopped trying. We worked together, Republicans and Democrats, to build consensus. And that's what I'll choose to reflect on for this final column.

Together, we worked to put New York State back on the right track and we delivered: cutting income taxes for middle class families to the lowest they've been in nearly 60 years; passing the property tax cap; investing hundreds of millions of dollars into Long Island's economy; delivering record state education aid for our local schools; taking major steps to protect our environment; and doing it all without raising a single tax or fee!

We were able to address a number of quality of life issues that may not have statewide importance, but matter deeply to those in their respective communities. I also authored 125 state laws on such issues as combating the opioid epidemic, workforce development, increasing safety for first responders, helping homeless veterans, and e-prescription mobility.

When I first ran for State Senate, our goal was simple: to make New York more livable for the millions of everyday, working people who call it home. And we did just that despite the naysayers who said New York was ungovernable, that we should have just given up.

A lesson I learned growing up while working summers in construction with my dad was to always leave things better than we found them. With every endeavor I undertake, including this one, that's the goal I set. As I say farewell to all of you around the district, I'm told that New York is better today than it was six years ago. That makes me proud but there's still work to do.

Our next Senator, Elaine Phillips, is a personal friend who I know to be a compassionate, thoughtful leader who will work diligently to make things even better. She'll do great things for our neighborhoods and will continue the progress for which we've fought so hard. I wish her well.

So now I say farewell to all of you, the people I will miss most of all. It's hard for me to imagine not being there for your graduations, civic meetings, tree lightings or the many impromptu run-ins at the local diner. To be sure, I have received nothing but kindness and welcome from people of every political stripe and it confirms what I knew all along: there's more that unites us than divides us. We are mostly good people who simply want what's best for our families. Don't let anyone tell you different.

Though I'm leaving the Senate, it doesn't mean I'm going away. I may write a column to you from time to time because this is my home, where I grew up and where Paula and I are raising our four daughters, and I still want the very best for all of us. And if you see me in the market, running errands in my ugly boots, please don't tell Paula.

The most appropriate way to close this incredible journey is by saying the same thing said at its beginning; thank you for giving me the honor and privilege of serving our community. It's one of the greatest gifts I've ever received and something which I will always treasure.

Wishing you and your family nothing but the best in the New Year and the years to follow – health, happiness, prosperity ... and a government that works for you.