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**BUDGET AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY SENATOR ANTONACCI TO PROVIDE VITAL MANDATE RELIEF FOR COUNTIES BLOCKED BY SENATE DEMOCRATS**

During the budget debate today, Senator Antonacci submitted legislation to amend Budget Bill (S1505C) which would mandate local Boards of Election, provide e-poll books. Since this is another unfunded mandate for fiscally stressed municipalities, Senator Antonacci submitted a budget amendment to the bill which would establish the New York State Early Voting and Voter Friendly Ballot Act Fund. The Fund would be overseen by the State Comptroller and Commissioner of Taxation and Finance and be comprised of all revenues received from the Abandoned Property Fund. The fund would provide payments to boards of elections to pay for the costs of early voting, as well as any local personnel or capital costs incurred to comply with those provisions.

“Because the agreed upon budget provides only \$14.7M for e-poll books and \$10M for early voting implementation and the New York State Board of Elections has estimated that early voting and e-poll books will cost approximately \$125M, I am extremely concerned as to how our already fiscally stressed local governments will pay for this unfunded mandate,” said Antonacci.

Another portion of this budget amendment rejected by the Senate Democrats sought to require the State provide funding for all mandates it imposes upon local governments. It would have reactivated the State Mandate Relief Council with powers to address unfunded State mandates. and imposed limitations on state agencies seeking to promulgate regulations. If passed, the amendment would have also provided regulatory relief to small businesses, establish a state small business liaison and required the Office of State Comptroller to conduct a study and issue a report regarding the extent and cost of legislation that imposes unfunded mandates upon local governments in New York State.

“Rather than hearing the outcry from local governments to cut taxes, mandates and regulations which would ultimately curb taxes for New York State residents, the Senate Democrats seem more concerned with checking off something on their “to do” list without the adequate State resources for implementation,” Antonacci concluded.

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