



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

From the Desk of Senator Jack M. Martins

JACK M. MARTINS March 28, 2011

| ISSUE: **LOCAL GOVERNMENT, BUDGET**

| COMMITTEE: **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Ending the Cycle of Business as Usual in Albany

What a difference a year makes.

If you think back to the budget crisis of a year ago and the discussions today, there truly is a marked difference. In both, the state was grappling with a devastating fiscal crisis, but this year the commitment was made to reduce spending as opposed to continuing the cycle of ever more taxes and spending. That was the norm in Albany from both sides of the aisle for far too long. We all remember the more than \$14 billion in taxes, fees and surcharges the past two years on like payroll, electricity, natural gas, and bottled water.

The truth is that New York does not have a revenue problem, it has a spending problem. The fiscal predicament the state finds itself in came as a result of years of overspending. We had to tackle the \$10 billion deficit we inherited in this year's budget, but recognized that it could not be by further burdening our taxpayers. Most important, it was a bipartisan effort with my Senate colleagues to work with Governor Cuomo and members of the Assembly to craft this year's budget. Yes, knew there would be sacrifice, but it would be shared and equitable. Our common-sense fiscal policy of cutting spending and reducing taxes puts us on the path

to fiscal recovery.

In our efforts to cut spending, the New York State Senate has set its priorities. Among those priorities is education and job creation. After the Governor proposed his budget, we restored in our budget over \$280 million in aid to education. We also restored the proposed cuts to 4201 schools for the disabled such as the Henry Viscardi School in Albertson and the Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf. We exempted all schools from having to pay the MTA payroll tax. Most notably, we've omitted ourselves job creation by supporting the Governor's Power for Jobs program as well as working for tax incentives for businesses to hire new employees.

Notwithstanding our efforts, however, there are special interests, committed to the status quo, that would have us continue the State's historic tax and spend cycle – taxing others to pay for their particular interests. Now is not the time to raise taxes on anyone. Many of our family and neighbors are out of work and struggling to remain in the communities they helped build. We must redouble our efforts to impose and maintain fiscal discipline. It is the only way we will encourage the investment and relocation of businesses to our State that will create the private sector jobs we need.

In order to change the fiscal condition of the state, we must change the culture of Albany. But there are those special interests who have opposed this change. That's because the current system works them and not us. We've seen them promote their own agenda these past few weeks – the mailings, phone calls, and ads. A word of caution – take the rhetoric with a grain of salt and understand who is sending you the information.

These past few weeks, various groups have accused me and others of cutting funding for education and protecting millionaires. For the record, both allegations are lies. (1) As I stated earlier, my colleagues and I were able to restore hundreds of millions of dollars in funding to

education that the Governor had initially cut. (2) We did not vote either for or against an extension of the “millionaires’ tax” (which applies to individuals earning over \$200,000 and families earning over \$300,000.) that expires at the end of this year. The Governor did not include it in his budget at all.

I did not go to Albany to cater to the desires of special interest and lobbying groups who have only their own interests at heart. I went to Albany to protect the interests of my constituents, the people who choose to remain in our communities, working hard and raising families

Special interest groups can choose to attack in order to protect the corrupt system that has always worked for them, but we’re changing that culture whether they like it or not. I cannot and will not accept business as usual in Albany.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve.