

Senate Update: 6/29/09

The following took place in Albany:

At 2:00 P.M., Senator Malcolm Smith and the Senate Majority held a press conference to discuss actions designed to terminate the Senate stalemate.

1. We are asking Senators Dean Skelos and Pedro Espada to:

- Join us in the Senator Chamber to vote on non-controversial legislation.
- Put aside the disagreement over the position of President pro temp until after a vote on all important pending legislation, especially items set to expire. (The expiration of various legislative initiatives would cost New York State billions of dollars in lost resources.)
- Agree to alternate presiding officers in the Senate Chamber. (This has been a sticking point for both sides. The presiding officer regulates movement on the Senate floor, and alternating this position will enable both sides to share control of the Senate.)
- Develop a list of *non*-controversial Bills that both sides will pass immediately. (There are several laws that are about to sunset. Both sides support renewal, and voting on such items is normally procedural in nature. Failure to enact them would disrupt many municipalities.)

2. Majority Leader Senator Malcolm Smith announced that we will no longer have private negotiations with Minority Leader Senator Dean Skelos and Senator Pedro Espada. We believe it is important for the public to observe first-hand which side is actually preventing the termination of the stalemate.

At approximately 5:30 P.M., a state judge responded favorably to a law suit filed by Governor David Patterson that requires both the Majority and Minority parties to enter the Senate Chamber together. Majority Leader Malcolm Smith and his colleagues support the judge's decision and will abide by the ruling by entering the Senate Chamber at 10:00 A.M Tuesday.

Minority Leader Dean Skelos and his colleagues filed an appeal to the ruling, attempting to quash this order to enter the Chamber jointly. This would perpetuate the gridlock in the Senate.

We must move past the struggle over the position of President pro tempore of the Senate. That issue can be resolved at a future date when session is over. We must sit down right now and enact all important legislation, particularly items that are about to sunset. These include School Governance (in New York City) and Power for Jobs.

I will continue to provide updates and shed light on the progress of negotiations in order to provide you with a clear picture of every development. You will not be dependent on a distorted picture of the continuing impasse. Although the daily tabloids give the inaccurate impression that none of the Senators want to end the stalemate, the truth is that Senator Malcolm Smith and I have repeatedly asked our colleagues in the Minority to join us in the Senate Chamber to conduct the important legislative business of the State of New York.

- NYS Senator Eric Adams