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JOINT STATEMENT FROM NEW YORK SENATE MAJORITY COALITION CO-LEADERS DEAN SKELOS AND JEFF KLEIN

When the Senate Majority coalition was formed three short months ago we said it could serve as a governing model for the nation. Last night, our coalition produced its most significant accomplishment to date – – passage of a responsible, early budget for the third year in a row. In a state once synonymous with late budgets and partisan bickering, this is a tremendous accomplishment.

Unlike Washington, Democrats and Republicans in Albany are working together to produce results that reflect the priorities of hardworking New Yorkers.

This budget includes hundreds of millions of dollars in tax relief for businesses and families, including reduction and elimination of the job-killing 18-a energy tax paid by every New York business and every New York family. This budget also addresses the high rate of unemployment amongst our state's veterans, by providing a major tax break to businesses who hire one of our returning veterans.

The enacted budget provides a \$350 Family Tax Relief credit for middle-class families with children, and makes available nearly a billion dollars in additional school aid distributed fairly and equitably throughout the state. This budget responds to the needs of New York's low-wage workers, by increasing the minimum wage in a responsible way to \$9 per hour over the next two-and-a-half years.

The final product keeps spending below a self-imposed 2 percent spending cap to protect the gains we've made over the last two years in getting New York's fiscal house in order.

While there's much more work to be done, this budget undeniably moves our State and its people forward.

The Senate took a good budget proposed by Governor Cuomo and made it better. By doing so, our coalition passed an important test and showed the country how bipartisan government is supposed to work.

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