



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Budget Logjam Needs to Break

JAMES L. SEWARD March 24, 2009

ALBANY, 03/24/09 – Senator James L. Seward (R/I/C- Oneonta) commented today on the closed state budget process:

“I am extremely disappointed with the lack of progress on the state budget. Promises of openness and reform by Democrats have come up short, and now we are a week away from the budget deadline with nothing to show to the public.

“Now more than ever we need to have an on-time budget, and yet, the secretive meetings are all we have to go on. Conference committees still have not been appointed, budget bills have not been drafted, and five way open leaders’ meetings have been non-existent. The only individuals at the budget bargaining table have been three New York City Democrats, completely leaving upstate voices and concerns out of the process.

“My senate Republican colleagues and I issued our own budget plan that includes job creating tax cuts for small businesses, tax relief for middle class families, and real and recurring reform measures to help grow our way out of the current economic downturn. Our plan also includes over \$2.2 billion in new cost cutting measures. It has now been nearly three weeks, and the governor has not responded to the steps laid out in this plan.

“With the current financial crisis, too many people are losing their jobs, and in some cases, their homes. It’s more important than ever that we have a sound state budget in place, on time. That can only happen as a result of an open, transparent process that includes the interests of the public from every corner of the state.

“We need adequate time to review the budget, and the public should also have a chance to see these bills before they are voted on. To accomplish this, Governor Paterson, Leader Smith and Speaker Silver need to open up the process now, and start open budget negotiations. Time is of the essence; talk of reform needs to end; we need definitive action, and we need it now.”