



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Frank Padavan

## State Budget Secrecy Continues

FRANK PADAVAN March 23, 2009

New York State Senator Frank Padavan (Queens) today blasted Senator Majority Leader Malcolm Smith, Speaker Silver and Governor Paterson for continuing to work in secret on the important issues facing our state, especially the 2009-2010 State Budget.

“For years, I have stood at the forefront of the legislative reform movement and with regards to budget reform we have made significant progress,” Padavan said. “However, clandestine actions by the new Senate Majority in conjunction with Speaker Silver threaten that very progress and they seem content to shut out the voices of millions of New Yorkers in the important budget deliberations. The conference committees, which are mandated by law, are a vital part of the budget process that allow for the necessary openness and transparency when it comes to the hard earned tax dollars of millions of New Yorkers. To even threaten to do away with the budget conference committees shows a willingness to endanger the public trust.”

In 2005, Padavan served as the co-chairman of the Senate Majority Taskforce on Government Reform. The taskforce’s findings and report lead the way to many of the budget reforms that were met with unanimous bipartisan support in the Senate and Assembly two years later. Despite these reforms and progress, the budget process this year has been shrouded in secrecy and marred by dysfunction. No clear indications have been given by the Speaker and Senate Majority Leader on the formation of conference committees and budget

resolutions.

“By now, members of conference committees should have been appointed and their work putting together the areas of the budget should be well underway. At the rate things are going right now, an on-time budget is in doubt and one of the fundamental duties of the new Senate Majority would falter into utter failure. In fact all signs are pointing to any final budget being rammed through the process by the Governor, the Speaker and the Majority Leader with no public input or debate,” Padavan said.

“With a week away to the budget deadline and the clock rapidly ticking to the start of the 2009-2010 Fiscal Year, the onus for responsible and accountable action falls on Governor Paterson, Speaker Silver and Senate Majority Leader Smith to open up the process and engage with not only the entire state legislature but more importantly with all New Yorkers. For all their talk, it’s time to walk the walk on reform, accountability and transparency and open the budget process immediately.”