



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George D. Maziarz

Statement From Senator Maziarz on the Adopted State Budget

GEORGE D. MAZIARZ April 6, 2009

I voted 'no' on every budget bill debated in the State Senate this week. At \$132 billion, this bloated budget will tax and spend our economy into the ground.

In these tough times, families across the state know that every dollar counts. How can we now ask them to pay more for property taxes, utility bills, and a host of other fees and surcharges?

The New York City troika who made this budget in secret has no idea about what kinds of problems our constituents in Upstate New York are facing. Sadly, there was not a single Democrat from Upstate—not Senator Stachowski, not Senator Thompson, not Senator Aubertine, not Senator Valesky, not Senator Breslin—who had the courage to stand up to their downstate party leadership and do what was right for their districts. They all voted 'yes' and went along with a scheme that Upstate chambers of commerce, editorial boards, businesses, and residents resoundingly say will set us back even further.

As representatives, these Senators are supposed to listen to those whom they were elected to serve and speak up for their interests in Albany. Clearly, however, they are only listening to their party bosses. Clearly, they are speaking up only as mouthpieces to defend an indefensible budget. Where was their advocacy? Where was their leadership? Their constituents are going to be asking those questions for a long time to come.

The Niagara Power Project is in my district, and I serve on the Senate Energy Committee, so energy issues are close to my heart in Albany. I was glad that all five of these senators joined me in opposing the New York Power Authority's proposed electric rate increase that would have hit families hard. We beat that back. At the time, just two weeks ago, each one of these senators decried NYPA's actions and drew a line in the sand against rate increases. Now, their so-called concern and compassion for public utility customers have gone out the window. They voted for massive new assessments on public utility companies in the state budget. Guess who will bear the burden of these hundreds of millions of dollars in increased energy costs? Our families and our businesses who are already paying some of the highest bills in the nation. Just think of the impact this will have on businesses in Western New York such as General Motors or Delphi.

The assessment increases will be much larger and much more injurious to our economic climate than NYPA's proposed rate increases. Simply put, these five senators spoke out against higher utility bills when it was convenient for them. Now, they know they need all 32 votes in their conference to pass a bad budget. Rather than go back to the drawing board to come up with a better plan, or engage in real debate, they are marching in lock-step with the New York City agenda of their party bosses. Everyone in Upstate New York should be worried.