



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John A. DeFrancisco

Senator Valesky Shuts Down Debate on “Most Secret” Budget

JOHN A. DEFRANCISCO April 1, 2009

State Sen. David Valesky today shut down debate on the hospital and health care portion of the proposed \$132 billion state budget.

Valesky, who was presiding over the Senate in his role as Vice President, called a halt to the question and answer session when it became apparent that Democrat Senators did not want to publicly explain details of the outsized plan that, despite setting spending records, still includes deep cuts to hospitals and nursing homes across the state.

Every Democrat Senator, including Upstate Democrats Darrel Aubertine, Neil Breslin, Bill Stachowski and Antoine Thompson, voted along with Valesky to stop the debate.

In addition, Valesky cut short Senators who tried to explain their votes on the budget bill. In fact, Senator Valesky cut off Senate Republican Leader Dean Skelos as he was trying to explain his vote, an unprecedented move. Senator Valesky was then overruled by Senate Majority Leader Malcolm Smith, who allowed debate to continue on the bill.

"The most secretive budget in history, hammered out behind closed doors with no public input, will remain cloaked in mystery because Senate Democrats don't want to explain, or possibly don't understand themselves, what it contains," said Sen. John A. DeFrancisco of Syracuse.

"The taxpaying public deserves to know—has a right to know—how their money is being spent in this bloated budget, but Sen. Valesky and the majority Democrats don't feel any need to tell them," said Sen. DeFrancisco. "Dysfunctional Albany has gone from bad to worse."

Republican senators were attempting to gain details about the bill—just one part of a plan that boosts spending by more than 10 percent and hikes taxes by \$8.5 billion—such as which hospitals and nursing homes would be impacted by deep health care cuts.

"Every day, Senate Democrats expose the hollowness of their pledge to reform Albany, and this effort sets a new low," Sen. DeFrancisco said. "It's time for Sen. Valesky and the Democrats to remember who pays for their secret budget plan, and stand up and be accountable."