Senator Defrancisco Launches Grass-Roots Petition Drive to Restore Star Rebate Checks

JOHN A. DEFRANCISCO   April 29, 2009

Senator John A. DeFrancisco (R-I-C, Syracuse) and members of the Senate Republican Conference today launched a statewide, grass-roots petition drive to restore the STAR property tax relief rebate checks that were eliminated by Democrats, and are very important to middle-class families.

"Property tax relief has always been one of my top priorities, and I will continue to fight for struggling homeowners in Central New York," said Senator DeFrancisco. "Now, more than ever, our families need this money to help them make ends meet. Our petition drive serves to show those in Albany who voted to eliminate the checks, just how important they are to families across the state."

Senate Republicans have created a new on-line petition to pressure Democrat lawmakers to restore the rebate checks they eliminated as part of the recently-enacted state budget. The on-line petition can be accessed by visiting "Iwantmystarcheck.com."

The 2009-10 state budget, put together behind closed doors and in complete secrecy by three New York City Democrats, took away the STAR rebate checks worth hundreds of dollars to seniors and homeowners. The checks are mailed out each fall to help residents pay their bills

or cover some of the costs of rising school property taxes.

Senate Republicans initiated the STAR rebate check program in 2006, and successfully beat back efforts last year by Governor Paterson and former Governor Spitzer to eliminate it.

Senate Republicans also fought against the Democrats' efforts this year to eliminate the checks during the budget deliberations. Senator DeFrancisco and his colleagues offered an amendment that would have restored the checks. Unfortunately, the amendment was defeated when every Democrat in the chamber voted against it.

Restoring the STAR rebate checks would provide an additional $177.76 million for Central New York.