



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Stephen M. Saland

Senator Steve Saland on the 2009 State of the State Address

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Senator Steve Saland (R,I,C Poughkeepsie) today responded to Governor Paterson's 2009 State of the State Address:

As we all know, this year our country and our State have faced unprecedented fiscal challenges. Revenues we once relied on to pay for vital services have been significantly reduced creating an enormous current year shortfall, as well as a daunting projected deficit for the coming year.

Given the fiscal challenge before us, we must make basic, if not structural, changes in how State government operates – government spending must be curtailed. I agree with the Governor that we must spend more effectively. New York State must tighten its own fiscal belt just as individual New Yorkers are being asked to tighten theirs. As we begin the new Legislative term, we must focus our energies on strengthening our State's economy by helping businesses grow and create jobs that generate more revenue for State and local governments. To that end, the Governor's plan to bring manufacturing jobs back to New York is certainly welcome.

We must also be cautious and not simply shift State costs to local governments to balance the State's Budget. Property taxpayers simply cannot afford anymore tax increases. It is vitally important that school districts and local governments be given the flexibility to initiate cost savings measures such as shared services. As the Governor indicated, we must also provide relief from onerous State mandates, so their costs can be reduced without eliminating important programs and services and without passing these costs to local taxpayers.

I also applaud the Governor's emphasis on making energy a focus in the coming years. Providing school districts and local governments with the information they need to begin using clean renewable energy is certainly a good start to help our environment and lower costs.

The coming year will bring unprecedented challenges to our State and we must meet these challenges head on. I look forward to working with the Governor, my Senate colleagues, and the Assembly to put New York back on firm fiscal footing for the good of the people of this great State.