



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Senator Griffo Votes Against 'Disgraceful' State Budget

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(Albany) - Saying that the state's 2009-2010 budget raids the pockets of average taxpayers while further eroding Upstate New York's damaged economy, Senator Joseph A. Griffo announced his strong opposition to the budget.

"If you drive a car, this budget nails you. If you use a cell phone, this budget taxes you. If you have health insurance, the budget tacks stealth taxes into your costs," Griffo said. "The budget protects the interests of the insiders represented by the three New York City men in a room who put the budget together while declaring open season on the average working family trying to make ends meet. This budget spends, wastes and taxes when the times demanded fiscal responsibility. It is a disaster and an outrage."

Griffo noted that state Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli said that, "The budget is not a long-term solution to New York's propensity to spend more than the state can afford. ... Instead of using the Federal stimulus to restructure the financial plan and match projected revenues to long term growth in spending, the budget uses stimulus funds as a short-term fix."

Griffo said the budget fails to rein in spending, despite months of claims by Gov. Paterson that the state needed to spend less. "In the final analysis, once they went behind closed doors, all this talk about cutting back state spending gave way to a spendthrift mentality that will increase spending \$10 billion, 7 times the rate of inflation. New York is spending \$132 billion in taxpayer dollars without regard to the huge deficit being piled on the backs of working people," he said.

Griffo noted that several tax and fee increases were dropped from the budget when he and advocates from around the state opposed the measures. "The taxes and fees that remain are going to cost people time after time after time in their daily lives. Higher drivers license fees, a new \$25 fee to replace all the license plates in the state, fees on cell phones, higher taxes on beer and wine sales, an increase in fees for a hunting license, more taxes to light and heat your home – all of these will cost people who cannot afford it hundreds of dollars every year," Griffo said. "The average working man and woman is being taxed to death to maintain the political status quo in Albany. It is disgraceful."

Griffo said the budget's proposed tax increases will damage Upstate New York's fragile economy. "This budget affirms New York's status as one of the highest-taxing states in the nation, and tells budding entrepreneurs and those struggling to stay afloat that New York is not interested in growing jobs, only in gobbling tax dollars," Griffo said. "Because of the taxes this budget imposes, a middle-class family of four will be paying on average, close to \$2400 more this year, and communities across Upstate New York that have been facing rising unemployment and job losses are going to see an even bigger hit. This budget chokes off any hope for economic revival with a tax-and-spend mentality that is the opposite of what New York really needs."

Griffo said that the budget reflects the result of closed-door secrecy by the downstate Democrats who brewed up the spending package. "The Democrats have ignored the needs of Upstate by excluding the people of Upstate from the room, and the needs of Upstate from this budget," said Griffo, who has strongly championed legislative and budget process reform during his tenure as a Senator. "When three New York City Democrats go behind closed doors to make deals, this is what we get – a budget that spends money taxpayers don't have, buries average New Yorkers in new taxes and chokes off hopes of economic recovery."