



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Betty Little

## Little Concerned New Budget Does Not Promote Job Growth

BETTY LITTLE March 30, 2009

The only thing worse than this year's budget process is the product itself.

While there is a lot to not like about the plan, what concerns me the most is the absence of a job growth strategy. The new budget does nothing to ensure that two years from now, when most of the federal stimulus money is spent, our state's economy will be stronger. In fact, by raising taxes and fees \$8 billion, this plan will inflict damage on our economy at a time when families and businesses can not afford a heavier burden.

It did not have to be this way. My colleagues and I offered some reasonable alternatives, such as consolidating state agencies to eliminate overhead costs, stepping up Medicaid fraud prevention and recovery efforts and enforcing the law that requires the collection of taxes on cigarette sales to non-native Americans on Indian reservations.

Under the guise of wanting to pass a budget on time, the 'three-men-in-a-room' negotiated behind closed doors what has been universally decried as one of the most secretive deals ever concocted in Albany. A \$17 billion deficit requires that some tough choices be made. But somehow the architects of this budget have failed to make many smart ones.

One bright spot is the rejection of a proposal to freeze tax payments on state-owned lands. A broad coalition of Adirondack interests demanded nothing less than the complete

elimination of this proposal. We spoke with one, unified voice and got the result we wanted.