



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Frank Padavan

Budget Dysfunction Reigns With Less Than A Week Before Deadline

FRANK PADAVAN March 26, 2009

With less than one week to go before New York reaches the constitutionally mandated April 1st deadline for the adoption of the state budget, Governor Paterson, Speaker Silver and Senate Majority Leader Smith continue to hold secret three way discussions on the state fiscal policy for the upcoming fiscal year. As a result of this continual pattern of abuse and turning their back on budget reforms adopted just two years ago, New York State Senator Frank Padavan (Queens) is once again blasting all three men for failing to include the entire State Legislature and for that matter the public at large in the important budget talks.

“The current state of the budget process is the worst I have seen in my years of service in the State Senate,” Padavan said. “Secrecy and dysfunction reign when openness and cooperation is needed especially when the state is facing a growing economic crisis. Even when they are asked to provide any information of their discussions, Speaker Silver and Senate Majority Leader Smith continue their assault on the legislative and budget process and refuse to provide tangible details. This is pure political arrogance and an abuse of power,”

“Editorial boards and good government groups throughout the state have stressed time and time again, throughout this year’s budget process to the state legislative majorities to live up to the reforms that were adopted in 2007 with bipartisan support and much fanfare amongst

the respective legislative chambers. Despite this call for common sense action and cooperation, all three men in the room have failed to listen and do what is right for the taxpayers of New York. Sadly, it's the public that will suffer from this complete lack of transparency by the Governor, Speaker and Senate Majority Leader," Padavan said.

"No conference committees, no budget resolutions, a host of secret budget negotiations all add up the a willful violation of the Budget Reform Act of 2007 and that is completely unacceptable to every hardworking New Yorker who is struggling to make ends meet," Padavan said.

"Sadly all signs point to a non-stop continuation of this arrogance of power with the potential for budget bills to be acted upon without any time for analysis and public comment," Padavan said. "Years of progress toward reform have been compromised by Speaker Silver, Governor Paterson and Senate Majority Leader Smith."

Padavan stressed that he and his Senate Republican colleagues have advanced the only public legislative proposal for the 2009-2010 State Budget. The plan reigns in spending, rejects tax and fee increases that would adversely impact overburden middle class families and small businesses and would use the federal stimulus funds effectively and in an equitable manner for health care and education investments.

The Senate GOP plan also eliminates the tax on health insurance and reverses the raid on the SUNY students tuition fund that were a part of the Democrats' Deficit Reduction Plan (DRP) that was rammed through the legislative process with no time for analysis and enacted in late January.

In order to meet the serious economic challenges the state is in the midst of and to help put the state on sound fiscal ground, the plan calls for the enactment of a state spending cap to

reign in state spending and increase state reserve funds. The plan calls for the consolidation of state agencies and reduces all non-personal related state agencies spending by a total of 5 percent across the board.

Additional highlights of the Senate GOP “A Better Plan for New York” include:

- Increased efforts to recoup state tax dollars by aggressively combating Medicaid fraud, waste and abuse;
- Enforcement of state law by collecting taxes from cigarette sales on Indian reservation; and
- Establishment of a pre-pay tuition program for SUNY and CUNY that would provide revenue for the respective university systems while saving middle class families and students money on future tuition costs.

“My Senate Republican colleagues and I are living up to the spirit of budget reform and showing the strong and clear leadership that is need to address the economic crisis we are facing,” Padavan said. “The plan we have advanced combats waste, rejects tax and fee increases, reigns in spending and will put the state economy on the right path to strength and growth. It’s accountable to the taxpayers of our state and fiscally responsible.”

“Now the ball is the court of the “three men in a room” to outline their plan, their priorities and allow for open debate of the state budget immediately for the good of the public and start to make amends for their shameful display during this budget process,” Padavan concluded