



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

Senator Flanagan Continues Fight for Long Island at Leaders Meeting

JOHN J. FLANAGAN May 19, 2009

Senator John Flanagan (2nd Senate District) took his efforts on behalf of Long Island residents directly to Governor David Paterson and the leaders of the Assembly and the Senate when he took part in a recent Leader's Meeting regarding property tax relief.

The meeting, which took place in Albany, was organized to discuss solutions to the challenge of escalating property taxes. The meeting included Senate Republican Leader Dean Skelos, Senate Majority Leader Malcolm Smith, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb.

As the Ranking Republican Member of the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Senator Flanagan was invited by Senate Republican Leader Dean Skelos to discuss the property tax issue in relation to reducing the tax burden imposed by education needs.

To that end, Senator Flanagan spoke about the mandate and regulation relief that would reduce costs for school districts as well as other entities throughout the state: "We should sunset all state regulations unless there can be some demonstrable evidence that they really do something for the taxpayers, for students in school districts, for people who are in small business, for people in large business. It puts a lot more pressure on the people who work for the public at the agencies and who work in the executive department. In a time and era

where it is hard to provide money, there are other ways to provide help. How do you make their lives easier if you can't give them money? Get rid of some of the onerous regulations.”

Governor Paterson indicated that he thought Senator Flanagan was on the right track and that he thought the next step is to get the local governments and other affected entities to identify the most egregious mandates and regulations. Senator Flanagan agreed and suggested that schools, businesses and chambers of commerce be more than willing to participate.

Senator Flanagan continued his property tax discussion by expressing his disbelief that Senate Democrats would pass a budget that failed to include real tax relief. While some Senate Democrats are now talking about various tax relief proposals, Senator Flanagan was clear that waiting until after the budget was approved to provide tax relief was misguided: “I have frustration because when we were in the majority, we did not leave the budget table until we had this resolved favorably. Our concern given what is going on is that it will be very difficult to move forward and come up with the money.”

That lack of real property tax relief is why the Senate Republicans as a whole opposed the recently approved budget, which was crafted in secrecy by the Democratic-controlled Senate and Assembly along with Governor Paterson. It was also why they pushed to reinstate the STAR property tax rebate program during budget negotiations after Governor Paterson eliminated it from his budget. While Senator Flanagan and his colleagues proposed an amendment to restore the \$1.45 billion program, their efforts were opposed by Senate Democrats, including those from Long Island, who voted against the program.

Protecting Long Island taxpayers was also the reason Senator Flanagan, along with many of his colleagues, voted against the MTA (Metropolitan Transportation Authority) Payroll Tax due to the impact that it will have on property taxpayers. The plan will adversely affect

every small business, school, not-for-profit and local government throughout Long Island and cause problems throughout the entire region.

To provide needed relief now, Senator Flanagan has launched a grass-roots petition drive to reinstate the STAR property tax relief. He is inviting all residents to join them in renewing their efforts to restore this important tax relief program to help deliver \$368.64 million in relief to Long Island homeowners.

“While these meetings are a great idea and promote a healthy discussion, if New York State is serious about providing relief now, returning the STAR rebate program to the residents is a great place to start. This is a valuable program that was very beneficial for many families and it should be restored immediately. The American dream of owning a home is quickly becoming unreachable for many Long Islanders and the state needs to provide relief when possible. While some have talked about restoring this plan, the time is now to actually do the right thing.”

Residents can join the fight by visiting *Iwantmystarcheck.com*, by visiting Senator Flanagan’s district office at 260 Middle Country Road in Smithtown or by sending him an e-mail at flanagan@senate.state.ny.us.