



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

Senate Democrats Applaud Senator Bruno for Introducing Meaningful Reform Legislation That Would Outline Every Dollar in the State Budget

LIZ KRUEGER December 14, 2006

Most Reform Legislation Remains Stalled in the Republican-Controlled Senate

New York—Senate Democratic Leader-elect Malcolm Smith today applauded Republican Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno for introducing reform legislation that would "eliminate lump sum appropriations" and line out the entire state budget. The intent of the legislation the Majority Leader has adopted is identical to two pieces of Democratic reform legislation—supported by the vast majority of Senate Democrats—that remain stalled in the Republican-controlled Senate.

S2304 (Krueger), which has not moved to a floor vote since it was first introduced in 2003, states that "all appropriations and reappropriations shall be specifically itemized and detailed to demonstrate the purpose of such appropriation, including the revenue source of such appropriation, and to ensure accountability in the use of public funds. Such specific itemization shall appear in clear and plain language." The second bill, S7092 (Krueger), provides for requiring full disclosure of any memoranda of understanding between the governor and the legislature regarding member items, appropriations and capital funding in the state budget.

"The debt load facing New York is tremendous, and for many years Senate Democrats have objected to the way in which hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars in undesignated funds are placed in the State Budget," Senator Smith said. "Governor-elect Spitzer and the Senate Democrats are dedicated to opening up New York's budget process—we welcome Senator Bruno to our point of view."

"Senator Bruno has fought reform-minded Democrats every step of the way, but this legislation could be the beginning of meaningful change in Albany. I hope this is more than lip-service from the Republican leader and that he gets his caucus to join ours and pass this legislation post haste," said Senator Liz Krueger, Chairwoman of the Senate Democratic Task Force on Legislative and Budgetary Reform. "New Yorkers have every right to know how their money is spent. The mindset of the legislators doing the spending may finally have caught up with the mindset of the taxpayers stuck footing the bill."

The Senate Democrats became the first Legislative Conference to make public all of its member items for 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06. Senate Democrats have made repeated calls for the Senate Republicans to act similarly.

"Under current rules, Senator Bruno will single-handedly decide what comes of this legislation and whether it actually comes to the floor for a vote. Passing it is his opportunity to show us he is serious about openness and transparency in New York government," said Senator Smith.

"I would be more than happy to have Senator Bruno as the co-sponsor of the 2 bills we have previously introduced. As a sign of good-will, perhaps he will in turn allow Democrats to sign onto his bill," Krueger concluded.

