



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

Statement by State Senator Liz Krueger on Court of Appeals Decision in Campaign for Fiscal Equity (Cfe) v. State of New York

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In a 4-2 decision issued this morning, the Court of Appeals concluded that an additional \$1.93 billion (in 2004 dollars) must be spent each year on New York City's public schools. That amount is much lower than the \$4.7 billion a year that lower courts had said was needed to give the city's children the opportunity for a "sound, basic education," as guaranteed by the State Constitution. The funding would increase the number of qualified teachers, grant universal pre-K access, smaller classrooms, and other strategies that will prepare our children with the tools they need for life-long learning.

While I found the Court's decision to be very disappointing, I am reassured by Governor-elect Eliot Spitzer's commitment to significantly increase funding for New York City's public schools in his budget proposals in January.

New York City's public schools have been underfunded for decades because our public school budget allocation process remains politicized, and local property tax laws have led to large disparities in the quality of the education that children in neighboring districts receive. We need to de-politicize the school-funding process, and ensure every child receives a sound, basic education—a goal which remains unmet.

Chief Judge Judith Kaye was correct in her statement that "A sound basic education will cost approximately \$5 billion in additional annual expenditures. I remain hopeful that, despite the Court's ruling today, the policymakers will continue to strive to make the schools not merely adequate, but excellent, and to implement a statewide solution."

The state's policymakers have not done this. In fact, in repeated legislative sessions, the Republican-controlled Senate has refused to comply with the CFE ruling, allowing our schools to fall deeper into neglect.

In his statement today, Governor-elect Spitzer recognized the need to go beyond the Court of Appeals ruling and find a comprehensive resolution to the funding disparities facing New York City public schools. Despite my disappointment with today's ruling, it is gratifying that New York will soon have a governor who appreciates and understands the long-term importance of a sound public education system, as it relates to the State's economic prosperity.