



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

A Message From Senator Nozzolio

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO November 19, 2009

| ISSUE: **BUDGET**

This message is without question the most important I have ever written. Our government, at the state and federal level, has been leading us down a destructive path. Every day, I hear impassioned pleas from the people in my district who are struggling to provide for their families and their basic needs. Many have lost their jobs while others have had their hours reduced or their pay cut. Everyone has felt the pains of these difficult economic times.

It has become clear that Washington has opted for massive bailouts, and Albany for outrageous spending sprees beyond anything we have ever seen, all while attempting to balance these budgets on the backs of our overburdened taxpayers. It is time for tough action, tough decisions and true reform.

Last April, a budget was adopted that was disastrous for hardworking families throughout New York. Over 100 new taxes and fees were levied on New York State taxpayers, which included assessments on necessities like healthcare premiums and energy costs. Small business owners, who are already struggling in today's economy, have been hit with a new fee which they must pay for the "privilege" of collecting sales tax for New York State. License fees were increased and new taxes were created as a way to pay for the more than \$10 billion increase in new spending that occurred when the 2009-2010 budget was adopted.

It is simply unacceptable to balance the budget and this outrageous spending spree on the backs of New York State taxpayers. Nearly every family has been forced to cut back on their budget, tighten their belts and make wiser choices with their hard-earned dollars. Unfortunately, New York State has refused to do the same thing.

In casting my adamant vote against the budget, I warned the Governor and his colleagues that New York residents, especially those in Upstate New York, could not afford the \$8.5 billion in new taxes and fees that were being adopted. **Now, just six months after the budget's adoption, the New York State Comptroller is predicting a**

budget deficit of nearly \$4 billion this year. It is clear that immediate and decisive action needs to be taken to cut government waste, remove government intrusion in our lives and restore common sense to our State government.

The issues facing our great State are vast. Our solutions must be firm and comprehensive. As a member of the Senate Finance Committee, I will continue to oppose any effort to balance the budget on the backs of Upstate taxpayers just as I opposed the 2009-2010 State budget last April. I have been working hard to address the issues that are impacting New York, especially those with the greatest consequences for our region:

* **Capping State Spending** and enacting a state constitutional spending cap amendment is essential. I am fighting aggressively to make sure that a spending binge - like what happened in this latest budget - never happens again by strongly supporting a constitutional amendment that would limit State spending increases. New York State must learn to live within its means and maintain a balanced budget.

* **Rescinding Health Care Taxes** that were imposed on insurance premiums is absolutely essential as New York State families continue to struggle with affordable healthcare. The State budget increased taxes on healthcare premiums by more than one-third. Our job-producing businesses cannot afford this increase and have been forced to pass the cost on to their employees.

* **Repeal Department of Motor Vehicle Taxes** that have disproportionately impacted Upstate New York, as we do not have the same access to public transportation that Downstate residents enjoy. The budget increased registration fees by 25% and the Governor proposed that every driver buy new license plates whether or not they are needed. You can join the fight against these new taxes and fees by visiting www.nysenate.gov/press-release/fight-new-taxes-driving .

* **Removing Hunting and Fishing License Fee Increases** that have also impacted Upstate harshly is important for many of our residents and businesses. Fewer sportsmen are applying for their licenses this year because of sharp increases in license fees. This is negatively impacting small businesses that rely on hunters and fishermen.

* **Cutting General Fund Spending** by the \$2.2 billion that was added to the 2009-2010 budget by those who controlled the budget process is necessary to stabilize our State's economy.

* **Repeal the 2% Energy Tax** that was included in the 2009-2010 New York State budget that has negatively impacted residents and businesses across the State. This assessment was the last straw for many Upstate manufacturers. That is why I have co-sponsored legislation (S.6132) that would remove this onerous tax. Thousands of New Yorkers have supported my online petition drive on this issue. If you have not done so already, you can support this legislation by visiting nozzolio.nysenate.gov.

* **Streamlining State Agencies** and reducing State agency non-personal services will save New York nearly \$500 million.

* **Reinstating Welfare and Medicaid Anti-Fraud Protections** and curbing unmandated Medicaid spending will save New York hundreds of millions of dollars without negatively impacting the individuals who need and rely on the program.

* **Placing a Freeze on Purchases** of recreational lands and reducing every State agency's budget until the State is fiscally sound will allow New York to save nearly \$400 million and prevent any new taxes from being levied on our residents.

* **Restoring the STAR Property Tax Rebate**, an important program that was abolished in the last New York State budget. The rebate program provided much needed financial relief for many of our residents on fixed incomes, especially senior citizens. It is vital that we restore this program, which is why I have begun a State-wide petition to achieve this objective. You can sign my petition by visiting www.nysenate.gov/press-release/join-fight-restore-star-rebates .

We must act now to address the serious issues facing New York State. We must weed out waste, cut government spending and remove onerous taxes that hurt everyone and drive families and businesses out of our State. It is vital that we do this now so that we can inspire business growth, create new jobs and restore New York State to its rightful place as the Empire State.