



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Owen H. Johnson

Senator Owen Johnson's Fights License Plate Fees

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November 19, 2009

ISSUE:

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From the very first moment Governor Paterson announced that a new State mandate would require every New Yorker to purchase new license plates at a cost of \$25 per vehicle, I have heard from many of the motorists who would be hurt by this New York City-driven tax hike. Because Long Islanders cannot afford more taxes, I started an online petition calling upon Governor Paterson to eliminate the costly fees associated with the new plates, which were imposed on drivers in the 2009-10 State budget.

The overwhelming response to this petition sent the message loud and clear that we have had enough, and I am pleased to inform you that Governor Paterson has heard our voices on this issue. The Governor has announced that he will eliminate the fees on the new license plates if the State Legislature can identify real savings actions to

replace the revenue from this misguided plan.

My Senate Republican colleagues and I have proposed a plan to reduce state spending to close the gap, the only conference to do so publicly. On the other hand, Senate Democrats, reportedly are considering more than a billion dollars in new taxes on hospitals, insurance companies and other health care providers.

While the Governor's announcement is encouraging, we must continue to make our voices heard if we want to let the New York City legislators know that the taxes and spending have to stop. Undoing the license plate fee is a good start – but what about the rest? What about restoring the STAR property tax rebates that were eliminated in the budget? What about rolling back the utility tax that has increased energy bills and hurt businesses? How about giving back the SUNY tuition increase or stopping tax hikes on health insurance or rescinding increased fees for driver's licenses, vehicle registrations, or fishing licenses?

If you signed my petition against the license plate fee, your support is deeply appreciated. I now encourage you to share it with anyone you know who is fed up with yet another unnecessary, burdensome tax on the hardworking families of New York State.

Governor Paterson's announcement shows that when New Yorkers speak with one voice, we can stop a bad public policy. We must now take the next steps to restore common sense and balance to New York State's government and return New York State to its rightful place as the Empire State.