



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo: We Must Attempt to Avoid Education and Health Care Cuts in State Budget

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New York State Senate Member

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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Queens, NY, November 20, 2009 -- Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., today reported on the progress of the ongoing negotiations on the state budget.

"Today, we are facing our greatest budget deficit in New York State history since the Great Depression," explained Senator Addabbo. "At the same time, this challenge represents a unique opportunity to evaluate our priorities and streamline our resources. In short, we need to learn to do more with less as a matter of practice from this point forward."

"My Senate colleagues and I have remained steadfast in opposing the Governor's deficit reduction plan which would disrupt and dismantle our classrooms in midyear, and further weaken our overburdened health care system. For the past several days, we have been negotiating an alternative budget which would close our \$3.7 billion dollar gap, while maintaining the quality of our educational and health care systems that are of paramount importance to every New Yorker." Addabbo believes that the Governor's proposed education cuts will certainly have a negative effect on the schools in his district. The Senator also feels that the declining state of health care providers in Queens cannot withstand the suggested health care cuts. "Not only could our local health care industry suffer state budget cuts, but these same cuts would mean reduced federal funding as well. We need to examine the Senate's alternatives to address the budget situation," he said.

The Senate plan includes the following measures:

- The institution of a spending cap that would tie annual increases in state operating funds to the rate of inflation
- Starting a tax penalty forgiveness program expected to increase state revenues by \$250 million in 2009-2010
- Transferring \$200 million from the Battery Park City Authority to the State General Fund

- Expanding the hours of operation of video lottery gaming, which is expected to generate an additional \$39 million for the state this fiscal year
- Amending the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act to save state transit systems \$36 million by eliminating the requirement to perform diesel emissions retrofits in vehicles that are within three years of being retired

Addabbo also sees the long-awaited decision on the Aqueduct Racetrack proposal as a financial gain for the state's budget. "I am pleased to report that Governor Paterson has agreed to many of our alternative proposals for closing the budget gap, and we are close to agreement on several others. We have stood firm on the point that we must not cut funding for programs that receive federal matching funds, which are earmarked for some of our most worthwhile programs and services," he noted.

New York State is facing a \$3.7 billion budget deficit in the current fiscal year and a projected deficit of \$7 billion in the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

Senator Addabbo expressed optimism about the fact that this year's deficit will be closed in an efficient, thoughtful manner that will ensure that vital services continue for the residents of his district and throughout New York State.

"We are all in this together and by working together, I believe that we will overcome our state's fiscal crisis and begin to get New York's economy back on track," concluded the Senator.