



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Winner

Winner: 2010 Session Must Produce Action on Upstate Economy, Other Key Issues

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Albany, N.Y., January 6—"From job creation to property tax relief, the plight of the upstate economy and upstate taxpayers deserves top billing in 2010," State Senator George Winner (R-C-I, Elmira) said today in response to Governor David Paterson's second State of the State message.

[To watch Senator Winner's response, [click here](#)]

Winner said that while there's an across-the-board recognition at the Capitol this year of the seriousness of New York's fiscal crisis and the overriding need to immediately address it, he remains deeply concerned about the impact the actions of Albany's leaders have had on upstate property taxpayers, upstate communities, and upstate employers over the past year.

"What are we going to do to jump-start the upstate economy? That's my number one concern in the new year," said Winner. "We need to do better for upstate this time around."

In addition to economic development, property tax relief, and state spending control, Winner highlighted several other issues that he believes are fundamental to beginning an upstate turnaround in 2010:

-- revamping state-level efforts to prevent the loss of potentially billions of state taxpayer dollars through abuse, fraud, and waste in New York's system of Medicaid;

- putting in place an upstate economic development program that provides assistance comparable to the Empire Zone benefits that have helped create thousands of jobs locally and across the upstate region, especially with the Empire Zone program set to expire this June as the result of action taken by Paterson and legislative leaders in last year's budget;
- expanding high-speed Internet service to many rural, upstate communities where it's currently unavailable, an issue commonly known as universal broadband;
- ensuring that state funding for upstate roads and bridges is provided in a way that's equitable to aid provided for the downstate, New York City transit system; and
- developing a stronger state-level response to an ongoing crisis in the dairy industry.

Winner said that the key test arrives in a few weeks when Paterson unveils his 2010-2011 state budget proposal. Winner said that last year's "Paterson Plan" relied on spending a huge influx of federal stimulus dollars, significant cost shifts to local governments, and an unprecedented package of taxes and fees.

"It was a very damaging budget for local taxpayers and local workers, and we won't survive a repeat performance," Winner said, adding that upstate legislators still have their work cut out for them in a government in which every major statewide office and both houses of the Legislature remain under the control of Democratic, downstate, New York City-based leaders.

"We'll keep standing strong and sounding the alarms," said Winner of his upstate colleagues. "We need to be on guard like never before. Albany's leaders proved last year that when the going gets tough, upstate's at risk of getting left behind."