



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Senator Saland Responds to the State of the State

STEPHEN M. SALAND January 6, 2010

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Traditionally, the State of the State offers the Governor the opportunity to outline new programs and initiatives proposed for the coming year. The Governor, lacking funds for new services and programs, provided a framework for ethics and campaign finance reform – issues that warrant the attention and action of the State Legislature. The Governor is to be commended for focusing his energies on much needed reform and we should work earnestly to see that elected officials are held to a standard that ensures citizens' best interests are what drive public policy.

Beyond the call for ethics and campaign finance reform, however, the Governor's State of the State was largely centered on a message of austerity. It is no surprise, as the State ended the calendar year with a negative level of cash on hand, that the 2009-10 bloated budget continues to wreak havoc on the state's fiscal standing. Hopefully those who supported the inflated budget in 2009 have learned their lesson and are ready to act responsibly.

The Governor spoke of required sacrifice and the need to confront the current and future deficit-laden reality. These comments were not unlike those he made in his last year's State of the State address. He spoke of the need for a spending cap, fiscal reform and initiatives to spur economic development. These are goals we share. I eagerly await the details of his proposals which will be provided when he presents his proposed budget in 2 weeks. I am hopeful that this year his words will not ring hollow and that the fiscal restraint and economic development of which he spoke become a reality.

While many will view this year as one which presents unprecedented fiscal challenges, I view it as an opportunity for fiscal reform. Often labeled as a fiscal conservative in my approach to state spending, it is my hope that responsible and austere budgeting will set the trend for future fiscal years and put an end to the days of deficits. When the Governor unveils his Executive Budget in two weeks, I will be looking for a fair budget that exercises a great deal of prudence and provides a plan for tax relief.