



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Winner

Some Good, Some Bad in Paterson Plan

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Albany, N.Y., January 19– State Senator George Winner (R-C-I, Elmira) said today that Governor David Paterson’s proposed 2010-2011 state budget contains several key proposals that would be helpful to strengthening the upstate economy, but only if Paterson can convince the Democratic leaders of the Legislature to go along.

“Speech after speech won’t matter unless the words are followed by action after action,” said Winner.

Winner was highly critical, however, that Paterson’s budget plan opens the door to another round of state tax and fee increases on top of the more than \$8 billion in new taxes and fees that the governor and legislative leaders enacted last year.

Earlier today in Albany Paterson unveiled an approximately \$134-billion state budget plan that calls for a wide range of spending cuts, particularly in the areas of education and health care, and approximately \$1 billion in tax and fee increases to close what the governor estimates is a \$7.4-billion state budget deficit.

“Governor Paterson and the Democratic leaders of the Legislature went behind closed doors together last year and emerged with an outrageous tax-and-spend state budget,” Winner said. “One thing we know for sure right now, we can’t stand a repeat of last year’s performance by Albany’s leaders.”

Winner welcomed Paterson’s recognition of the value of developing the Marcellus Shale natural gas industry and its potential benefits to state revenues and the local economy. He was especially pleased that Paterson has proposed to increase staffing within the state Department of Environmental Conservation to ensure environmental safety.

“I’m extremely pleased that Governor Paterson is taking steps to ensure that the Department of Environmental Conservation will have the staffing necessary to properly and effectively monitor and supervise any future well development to ensure environmental safety,” Winner said.

Winner also welcomed the governor’s support for proposals to place a permanent cap on state spending and to initiate property tax relief, as well as to crack down on abuse and fraud in the state’s system of Medicaid and provide local governments with relief from unfunded state mandates – most of which mirror initiatives

supported and acted on by Senate Republicans in the past to streamline state government and provide local property tax relief – calling them “building blocks of a stronger upstate.”

But Winner again expressed his concern over Paterson’s continued push to eliminate the Empire Zone program without putting in place a comparable economic development strategy that provides comparable benefits for upstate employers.

“I’m all for securing New York’s place in the new, high-tech economy, but not at the expense of the small businesses and manufacturers that have always been and will always be fundamental to the strength of the local economy,” Winner said. “I’m concerned that Albany’s leaders are willing to turn their backs on thousands of Southern Tier jobs by simply tossing the Empire Zone program on the scrapheap.”

Winner said that the unveiling of Paterson’s 2010-2011 budget strategy now gives legislators, local leaders, and the public the opportunity to begin examining the details and gauging its impact on upstate communities. In the end, he said that the test of the governor’s commitment to action will come in his willingness to push back against resistance from downstate New York legislative leaders to such an upstate focus in New York government.

“Governor Paterson did his best to sound like an upstate Republican in some key areas, but we’ll see if he goes to war against the likely wall of downstate, Democratic resistance to such an upstate focus in New York government,” Winner said.

Winner encouraged local leaders and area residents to share their opinions and suggestions on the Paterson plan. Access to additional details on the budget can be found on Winner’s Web site, winner.nysenate.gov. The site also provides direct contact information for Winner’s local and Albany offices, and e-mail.

“I look forward to hearing directly from this region’s local leaders and concerned citizens. It’s critical to determine if the governor’s plan offers the best way for our communities to move forward,” said Winner, whose 53rd District includes all of Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben and Yates counties, and part of Tompkins County (the city of Ithaca, and the towns of Enfield, Ithaca, Newfield, and Ulysses).

For additional details on Governor Paterson's 2010-2011 state budget proposal, [click here](#).