



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Winner

Winner Won't Toast Paterson Plan to Eliminate Wine Foundation

GEORGE WINNER January 21, 2010

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Albany, N.Y., January 20 –State Senator George Winner (R-C-I, Elmira), one of the Legislature’s most vocal and long-standing wine industry advocates, rejected today Governor David Paterson’s plan to completely eliminate state support for the [New York Wine and Grape Foundation](#).

Last year’s budget cut the Foundation’s funding from \$2.8 million to just under \$1 million. In his 2010-2011 proposed state budget, Paterson has called for completely eliminating the state

assistance that supports the Foundation's efforts.

"The rise of New York's wine industry is one of our state's most remarkable success stories, and the Wine and Grape Foundation has been a driving force behind the success," said Winner. "The Paterson plan puts at risk a statewide industry that generates billions of dollars in economic activity, accounts for thousands of livelihoods, forms the backbone of Finger Lakes tourism, and brings national and international acclaim to New York."

[Watch a News10 report.](#)

State legislators, including Winner, created the Foundation in 1985 at a time when New York's wine-and-grape industry was on the brink of collapse. Since then the Foundation, currently based in Canandaigua, has been the driving force behind the marketing, promotion, and research that has led to the industry's resurgence.

New York is now America's third-largest wine producing state, with more than 250 wineries statewide. Nearly 200 of these wineries were established after the Foundation's creation. The industry employs 18,000 workers and annually generates \$3.4 billion for the state economy. Over three million people visit the state's wineries every year. One-third of these visitors come from out of state.

"We need to take every necessary and reasonable action to address what we all recognize is a serious fiscal crisis, but this specific action would worsen the crisis in the long run," said Winner. "You don't address a fiscal crisis with a plan that jeopardizes long-term economic growth and stability."

On Tuesday 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. Winner was highly critical of the fact that Paterson's 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.

Winner is encouraging local leaders and area residents to share their opinions on Paterson's proposal.

Residents of his 53rd Senate District can share their opinions through a new "Quick Poll."