



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian X. Foley

## **Sen. Foley & Advocates Rally to Save Long Island's Parks**

Brian X. Foley

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Nearly 300 park goers from local communities joined State Senator Brian X. Foley (D – Blue Point) at a rally to support Long Island’s parks. The rally came in response to Gov. Paterson’s proposed cuts targeting state parks in order to fix the budget deficit. The list of parks being considered for closure include popular Long Island parks such as Heckscher State Park and parts of Jones Beach State Park, as well as local favorites such as Connetquot State Park, Caleb Smith State Park Preserve, Brookhaven State Park, and the newly established Brentwood State Park, the site of Sunday’s rally.

“Now more than ever, Long Islanders need their parks,” said Sen. Brian X. Foley. “The parks belong to the people; to take them away at a time when more and more families are seeking affordable recreation close to home is simply unacceptable,” Sen. Foley said. He further criticized the idea of fixing the budget by slashing parks, which constitute one quarter of one percent of the entire state budget. “Closing parks is not the answer to New York State’s fiscal troubles. Attempting to balance the budget on the backs of our parks is irresponsible. We must stand up for children and families on Long Island and fight to keep our parks open.”

Brentwood Soccer Club, which helped organize the rally along with Sen. Foley’s office, joined Sen. Foley in protesting the proposed cuts. “These are our parks. Where are our children going to play if they take these fields away from us? We will not let Brentwood State Park be closed,” said Violette Smith, president of the Brentwood Soccer Club.

In addition to Sen. Foley, the rally featured local elected officials and activists concerned about the detrimental effect losing our parks would have on communities.

State Senator Owen Johnson (R – Babylon), Assemblyman Phil Ramos (D – Central Islip), Town of Islip councilmen Gene Parrington and John Edwards called for the preservation of our parks.

“Brentwood State Park is more than just a place. It teaches our children about community, sportsmanship and the great outdoors,” said Assemblyman Phil Ramos. “During these tough economic times people rely on the park for free recreational activities; shutting it down will leave kids without healthy alternatives to gangs and destructive activities. We must keep this park open to improve the quality of life in Brentwood.”

In addition to organizing the rally, Sen. Foley’s office has set up an online petition drive denouncing plans to close Long Island’s parks. You can sign the petition by [clicking here](#) or visiting [www.nysenate.gov/petition/save-longislands-parks](http://www.nysenate.gov/petition/save-longislands-parks).