



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

Statement by Senate Republican Leader Dean Skelos

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Last year, Senate Democrats arrogantly prepared a budget in complete secrecy, with no time for public review and scrutiny and little time for questions and debate.

This year, they did it again.

Their final budget resolution was given to us just hours ago and they intend to bring it up for a vote today. It's clear they do not want a thorough review of the plan because even a cursory review shows that their priorities are wrong, and their numbers don't add up.

The Democrats \$135 billion budget increases spending without a way to pay for it. There are no structural reforms or long-term fixes to the state's fiscal problems. It doesn't do enough to provide property tax relief, does nothing to create jobs and will guarantee that next year's budget deficit will be \$3 billion greater than projected.

Their budget does not include a cap on state spending or local school taxes. They add \$1.5 billion in new spending that was not in the Governor's original budget. They increase spending on welfare and expand eligibility to include more people, rather than restoring the STAR property tax rebate check for all homeowners or providing other tax relief. They propose to increase Medicaid fraud recoveries by tying the hands of the Medicaid Inspector General to make it more difficult to fight fraud.

And to pay for it all, they are proposing billions of dollars in risky gimmicks, questionable tax collections and other fiscal sleight-of-hand tricks.

Senate Democrats are even trying to legalize marijuana for medical purposes through the budget, just like they did last when they gutted the state's drug laws under the cover of a state budget. And, incredibly, they even put a not-for-profit prisoners' rights group in charge of the state's juvenile justice system.

With all the spending and fiscal gimmickry, the Democrats' budget includes nothing to create new private sector jobs.

Add in the secretive, arrogant process that produced this resolution, the lack of time for scrutiny and review and the restrictive limits on debate and discussion, and we have no choice but to vote against this plan.

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