



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin J. Golden

Senate Republicans Will Provide Votes to Ensure Passage of Senate Legislation to Raise Charter School Cap

MARTIN J. GOLDEN May 4, 2010

SENATE REPUBLICANS WILL PROVIDE VOTES TO ENSURE PASSAGE OF SENATE LEGISLATION TO RAISE CHARTER SCHOOL CAP

Says Democrat Inaction Has Already Cost State \$700M in Federal Funds

Senate Republicans will provide the votes necessary to ensure passage of Senate legislation to raise the charter schools cap from 200 to 460 when Democrat Conference Leader John Sampson finally brings the bill to the floor for a vote later today. The measure would improve educational accountability for parents and provide expanded opportunities for students all across the State, Republicans noted.

Without the leadership of Senate Republicans, most of whom will vote in favor of the bill, the legislation would go down to certain defeat in the Senate.

Senate Republicans noted that Democrat inaction in January had already cost the State as much as \$700 million in federal "Race to the Top" funds.

"I remain disappointed that Senate Democrats refused to act on legislation earlier this year to enhance New York's opportunity to secure up to \$700 million in federal education funds.

We have always said that the votes were there in the Senate to pass this important bill, and now it's finally being brought to the floor," Senate Republican Leader Dean G. Skelos said.

"Passage of a bill to expand the number of charter schools in this state would represent a win/win for all New Yorkers. By raising the cap on charter schools, it would give the State another opportunity to receive significant federal educational funding for our kids. I am hopeful that the Assembly will follow our lead," Senator Marty Golden (R,C-Brooklyn) said.

"By denying a vote on this measure before today, the leadership of New York State ruined any chance at \$700 million in federal funding for our school children. Today, our state needs to avoid repeating that mistake so that our students, our taxpayers and all of our schools can benefit," stated Senator John Flanagan, the ranking Republican on the Senate Education Committee. "The goal must be to find any way possible to eliminate or minimize the pain of education cuts so that our students continue to have access to the best education possible and that is something that everyone who is concerned about education in our state can and should support."

The \$700 million in federal funds could have helped offset expected cuts in State aid to New York schools this year. In his Executive Budget, the Governor recommended \$1.1 billion in education cuts and Senate Democrats approved those cuts in their budget resolution in March.

Without passage of a bill to raise the charter schools cap, New York finished second-to-last among sixteen finalists for "Race to the Top" funds. Delaware and Tennessee were ultimately chosen by the Obama administration to receive the awards.