



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Winner

## **Statement from Senator Winner to the residents of the 53rd Senate District**

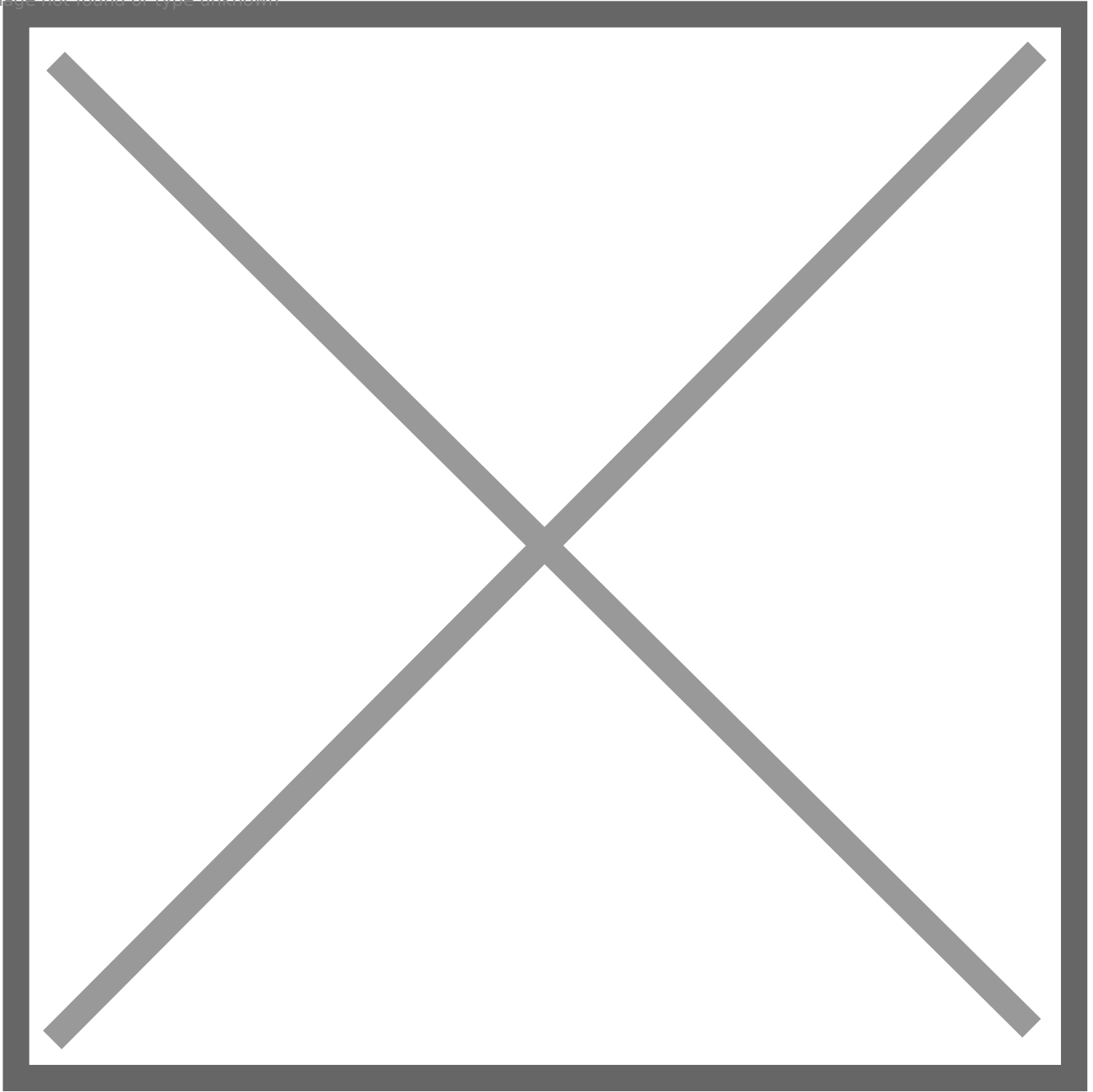
George Winner

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Elmira, N.Y., June 2— New York State Senator George Winner (R-C-I, Elmira) announced today that he will not seek re-election to a fourth consecutive term representing the residents of the state's 53rd Senate District.

The 53rd District encompasses all of Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, and Yates counties, and part of Tompkins County (the city and town of Ithaca, and the towns of Enfield, Newfield, and Ulysses).

Winner released the following statement to the residents of his 53rd District:

“It seems like I’ve spent a lifetime at the Capitol, on the floor of both the Assembly and Senate, standing up and speaking out for our region and for all of upstate New York, and I guess I have. It’s a commitment that I wouldn’t hesitate to give all over again.

“Above all else, I have treasured the opportunities to work together with the people of the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes, from all walks of life, to keep doing anything and everything we could to persevere in the face of tough times and fierce competition. This business of politics and government is, in the end, always about people, and there are no finer people anywhere on the face of the earth. I will be forever grateful that, together, we’ve been able to achieve a few good and decent things for the region we love and for the individual communities where we’ve lived, worked, raised families, and tried to build a better future.

“The strongest and most hopeful asset this region produces is communities that never give up, never back down, and know what it takes to weather the storms. I’ve done my best to represent this fighting spirit. It hasn’t always been perfect, but we’re still here, we’re still looking ahead, and we can be proud of that. I will forever be proud that we’ve worked hard to identify common goals, build on strengths, shore up weaknesses, and establish valuable, productive partnerships that will keep this region moving forward.

“It’s been a good run, I’ve given it my all, and it’s simply time for me to hand off this tradition of service to someone else who, I hope, will be no less willing and able to keep heading back to the Capitol year after year, legislative session after legislative session, and floor debate after floor debate to constantly and steadily roll up their sleeves, get down in the trenches, stand on their principles, shout out their fundamental beliefs, and carry on the fight for upstate’s rightful place in this government. In my view, there’s no work that’s more important in New York government today than this single-minded pursuit for the future of upstate.

“But until my final day in public service arrives later this year, know that my Senate offices will be working as hard as ever for the residents of the 53rd District. These are the toughest, most uncertain of times, and constituent service remains my foremost concern and responsibility.

“I will especially look forward in the days, weeks, and months ahead to do whatever I can to support those who will carry on for us. New York State government doesn’t just welcome you with open arms anymore. It’s a hard-fought competition for ideas and resources, and you better be ready for it. Experience matters, period. So I’ll be working to ensure that, beginning next January, our region will be represented by a new state senator with the kind of proven, unquestionable experience, ability, commitment, and determination that gives us the best chance for future success.”

Winner first arrived in state government in 1971 as an aide to the late Senator William T. “Cadillac” Smith II, who would become his mentor and lifelong friend. Winner was elected to the state Assembly in 1978 becoming, at the age of 29, one of the youngest members ever elected to the state Legislature. He was re-elected to the Assembly for 13 consecutive terms, rising to serve as the second-ranking member of the Assembly Republican Conference under four consecutive Assembly minority leaders.

In November 2004, area voters elected Winner to the state Senate where he served as chairman of the Senate Investigations Committee from 2007 to 2009, leading in late 2007 a high-profile Senate investigation of wrongdoing within the administration of former New York Governor Eliot Spitzer, an investigation that became commonly known as Troopergate.

Winner also headed the joint, bipartisan Legislative Commission on Rural Resources from 2005 to 2009.

Since taking office in the Senate, Winner has sponsored and helped secure the enactment of numerous new, often landmark laws in the areas of economic development, criminal justice, lobbying reform, and rural affairs. These laws have included the state’s first comprehensive strategy to combat the illegal production and use of methamphetamine; authorizing the direct shipment of wine into and out of New York State, an action that was widely viewed as critical to the long-term competitiveness of the Finger Lakes wine industry; Medicaid reform; regulatory reform for the state’s agricultural industry; procurement lobbying regulation; encouraging the use of alternative energy sources, particularly fuel cell technology; the promotion of local shared services and other local efficiency initiatives to help control local property taxes; and the ongoing development of high-speed Internet access to underserved rural regions.

But most of all over the course of his more than three decades in New York government, Winner has led literally hundreds of legislative debates on the floor of both the Assembly and Senate, carving out a commitment at the Capitol as a staunch and vocal advocate for the interests of upstate New York.