



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian X. Foley

Senator Foley Fights for Restoration of Education Funding

BRIAN X. FOLEY July 8, 2010

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Senator Brian X. Foley was joined by education advocates to call on his fellow Long Island senators to join him in supporting an override of Governor Paterson's veto of funding for education.

Last week, the senate and the assembly approved a budget bill that included \$600 million in restorations to education funding. Senator Foley and Senator Craig Johnson were the only Long Island Senators who voted in favor of returning this money to school districts and

taxpayers. Governor Paterson had proposed cutting \$1.5 billion. Based on the formulas used to calculate aid to school districts, schools within the 3rd Senate District were to receive the highest restoration amount of any senate district in the state. Governor Paterson vetoed the funding within hours of its passage.

“Funding for our schools is not something we can allow to become a proverbial political football,” said Senator Foley. “Long Island’s schools already receive funding at a level that is disproportionate to the percentage of students we have. When state aid is cut, the difference must ultimately be made up either by our property owners in the form of taxes or by our school children in the form of larger classes, fewer resources and reduced programs for athletics and the arts. I hope that my Long Island colleagues will join me in voting to override the governor’s veto so that our children can continue to receive the highest level of educational opportunity we can provide without schools needing to raise taxes to a level that will drive residents off of Long Island.”

The funding that was restored could be used by districts to help offset the property tax levies that were included in the budgets passed by residents in May. The original bill passed the senate without a single vote from the Republican minority.

“Even though all of my Republican colleagues voted no on these restorations the first time we considered them, thereby depriving school districts of funds that could be used to reduce property taxes, they now have a chance to correct the mistake of their earlier vote,” said Senator

Foley. “I strongly implore them to stop saying no to our taxpayers and children, and start saying no to their leadership by standing up for Long Islanders.”

“The legislature has supported restoration of school aid statewide totaling \$600 million, including approximately \$65 million for Long Island school districts,” said Lisa Tyson, Director of the Long Island Progressive Coalition. “For the state’s neediest districts like Brentwood, Wyandanch, Central Islip, William Floyd and Westbury these funds would be available to restore cuts to the classroom. Governor Paterson vetoed these restorations to our classrooms. We have seen gains in student outcomes in needy districts on LI and across the state as a result of the state finally beginning to provide adequate funding to these needy school districts. The Governor’s veto is a major step backwards and both houses of the legislature should vote to override it. Long Island’s legislators, no matter what party, need to stand together against Governor Paterson’s veto that is so destructive to our local schools.”

The leadership in the senate has indicated that they would only call an override vote if it was certain that there were the necessary number of votes available. If all of Long Island’s senators supported an override, it would provide the required number of votes.