



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo Returns His Per Diem Pay

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR August 3, 2010

Queens, NY, August 3, 2010 – On the day he's being called back to Albany for another rare summer legislative session to renew budget negotiations, NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., voiced his own frustration with the dysfunction in Albany. Addabbo is returning the per diem pay provided by NYS taxpayers for his travel and meal expenses for the recent session called for last week by Governor David Paterson that turned out to be anything but extraordinary or special. The Governor called the legislators back on July 28 and July 29 for a "special session" to pass his budget proposals. Since the Governor's budget bills were not sent to the Senate for a vote neither session day, no vote was ever taken by the Senate during their time in Albany last week. Addabbo, who had a previously scheduled speaking appointment in his Queens district on Wednesday evening, did attend the Thursday session in Albany, only to find out then that no business was to be conducted that day.

Addabbo explains, "I don't believe in good conscience that I should take my per diem pay when we did no legislative work in Albany last Thursday. Therefore, I am returning my check." Neither State Senators nor Assemblymembers have been paid their actual salary since the April 1 due date for the state budget. Legislators will not get paid salary until a budget is passed, but still can collect a per diem check for each day spent in Albany. According to Addabbo, last Wednesday evening, the Senator honored a local

speaking engagement put on his district calendar weeks ago. He arrived in Albany on Thursday, July 29, for a 10 a.m. session, which started at 10:50 a.m. He was told to return to the Senate chambers at 12 p.m. to vote on a bill. While he was in his Albany office doing constituent work, Addabbo was surprised to hear that the session was adjourned and the legislators were being sent home again. The Wednesday evening session had been even shorter, just 12 minutes, according to news reports. This two-day special session cost the taxpayers about \$100,000 in per diem expense checks at about \$170 a day, an extraordinary amount and an extraordinary waste of everyone's time.

The short stay in Albany did allow Addabbo to once again express to his leadership the frustration he shares with constituents over the long overdue state budget. Adds Addabbo, "Like I've said before, the Senate should get over its personal differences, act like responsible legislators and pass the last crucial revenue proposals to finish our state budget." The Senator said that the last remaining issues, namely a proposed property tax cap, the Medicaid shortfall contingency plan and variable tuition for SUNY and CUNY campuses are the issues holding up the completion of the budget. "I intend to continue to convey my anger over the lack of progress being made in Albany. We are far from reaching our potential as a government that operates efficiently for the state. I look forward to passing many reforms and changes that are needed in Albany," Addabbo concluded.