



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

From the Desk of Senator Martins

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It's been an historic week in Albany from the perspective that our state government is at last bringing tax relief to our residents. I was pleased to have voted along with my colleagues on a 2 percent tax cap to be imposed on local government. This will help to ensure that our residents will not be saddled with heavy tax increases that will drive them from their homes. The taxpayers have clearly spoken and we are listening.

The tax cap has been passed by the Senate and is supported by Governor Cuomo. We now need the Assembly to pass this legislation to begin the process of easing the tax burden on all New Yorkers.

The tax cap is the first step in tax relief for Long Island families. Along with the tax cap, we must ensure that state mandates will not hinder our local governments' and school districts' ability to meet the cap. To that end, I introduced a resolution that was passed in the Senate that urges Governor Cuomo and his Mandate Relief and Medicaid Redesign Teams to look for ways to reduce the costs of mandated programs on schools and local governments.

We are all partners in our mission to control property taxes. While our school districts and local governments must look for ways to contain costs, we must also identify mandates that are being passed that make it more difficult for them to do so. I was proud to have supported a bill to ensure that state mandates will be not be forced on municipalities and school districts and then ultimately onto our taxpayers unless they are adequately funded.

The day after the State Senate passed the tax cap legislation, Governor Cuomo gave his 2011-2012 budget address. The Governor's remarks reinforced the notion that these are indeed difficult times. I was pleased that the Governor agrees that taxing your way out of a recession is not the answer. I am, however, concerned over the cuts proposed for our schools, local governments and hospitals. In the 7th Senate District, many of the schools districts are facing state aid cuts in the double digits. As we continue budget discussions, I will be fighting to make sure the distribution of state aid is fair and equitable and is not falling disproportionately on us here on Long Island.

While getting our finances in order is of primary importance, there are other issues we must address. I am continuing to work on passing a bill that would allow local

municipalities to use lever machines or paper ballots in time for the March 15 village elections in addition to a bill that clarifies the local governments consolidation law by providing more information on governmental consolidation.

In addition to the work in Albany, I have continued to make my way around the 7th Senate District to meet with constituents and community leaders. I have gotten to know many of the organizations that are invaluable to the communities that make up the 7th Senate District and will continue to meet with the various organizations and residents.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve.