



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins Meets With Westbury School District Officials

JACK M. MARTINS February 11, 2011

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New York State Senator Jack M. Martins continued his tour of the schools districts in the 7th Senate District as he recently met with the members of the school board and administrative staff including Board of Education President Dr. Pless M. Dickerson and Superintendent of School Dr. Constance Clark-Snead from the Westbury School District to discuss important issues regarding the state budget and how it would affect area schools.

Recently, the New York State Senate passed a 2 percent tax cap for school districts and local governments. The cap, which is supported by Governor Cuomo and awaits passage in the State Assembly, restricts the increases in tax levy to 2 percent. However, in the case of school budgets, the cap can be overridden if the school budget is approved by 60 percent or more. If the cap ultimately becomes law, it will take effect for the 2012-2013 school budgets.

The Senate passed the tax cap in response to New Yorkers call for property tax relief, which is making it increasingly difficult for residents to stay in their homes. Senator Martins said the tax cap is a first step in providing tax relief. The Senator believes strongly that in addition to a tax cap, the need for mandate relief is great.

Senator Martins 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.

“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,” Senator Martins said.

The Senator also sponsored 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.

Another subject that was discussed was the Governor’s recent budget proposal that contains cuts in state aid to school districts in Westbury. While Senator Martins believes the state must get its spending under control, he is concerned about the proposed cuts to schools in the 7th Senate District.

“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,” Senator Martins said.

Senator Martins has been meeting with school leaders from the 7th Senate District. “It was my pleasure to meet with the education leaders from Westbury. It’s important to discuss the issues with those who are charged with educating our students. They are the future,” he said.