



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins Addresses Residents of The Amsterdam at Harborside

JACK M. MARTINS April 25, 2011

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On Friday, April 22, Senator Jack M. Martins visited the senior living community, The Amsterdam at Harborside in Port Washington. The Amsterdam at Harborside is dedicated to providing comfort and happiness to its residents.

Senator Martins was welcomed by Executive Director Margaret Minchini. He then had an opportunity to speak with the residents and then answered numerous questions about state government.

Senator Martins spoke about the budget recently passed for New York State, which closed a \$10 billion deficit by cutting spending without raising any taxes or fees. However, Senator Martins felt it was important not to disproportionately cut from schools and seniors and, therefore, fought to restore funding to education and programs such as the EPIC prescription drug program. "You never balance your budget on the backs of those who need the services the most," Senator Martins said.

Senator Martins also spoke about the greatest challenge facing school districts and local governments being the rising pension and healthcare costs and the need to provide some relief. The state last year created a Tier V with a mandatory contribution to the public pension system. Senator Martins believes that more needs to be done to ease the burden on schools and local governments, which ultimately have to pass those costs on to the taxpayers through property taxes.

Another question that came up had to do with redistricting. Senator Martins voted to support a Constitutional amendment that would create a non-partisan commission to draw lines. The commission shall consist of five members, none of whom may be past or current public officials, nor past or current office holders in any political party. The Temporary President of the Senate, the Speaker of the Assembly, the Minority Leader of the Senate and the Minority Leader of the Assembly would each select one member. The four members would select, by a vote of at least three members, a fifth member to serve as chair of the panel.

Senator Martins offered to return to The Amsterdam periodically to answer any questions the residents may have.