



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins' Message to the Graduates: Reason for Optimism

JACK M. MARTINS June 16, 2011

| ISSUE: **EDUCATION, LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

| COMMITTEE: **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Wishing the Graduates Success and Hope

Like so many of you at this time of year, I recently had the pleasure of watching one of my own children graduate from middle school. The auditorium was awash with the pure, unadulterated excitement of students, parents and even their teachers. As I sat quietly wondering where the years had gone, I got to thinking about this phenomenon. Exactly what were the ingredients of this energy? Was it pride in accomplishment? Was it a sense of relief? Or was it simply the prospect of summer vacation? While I think all of these things played a role, the conversations throughout the room made it clear. The reason was hope.

Every person in that room felt it. The students sensed they were finally on the road, looking forward to what their futures held. Parents sensed that happiness and shared in the optimism. And perhaps more clearly than anyone, their teachers could see those futures on the horizon.

We rightfully invest much in our children's futures, not just individually, but collectively as a society. That is because each generation embodies our hopes for a brighter future, a better country, a more just world. Yet while we do so much to prepare young people, we must ask

how we are preparing our communities for them and the lives they plan to make here? Do we generate opportunities? Do we create new jobs? Are we building affordable housing, improving the air we breathe, our healthcare or even the roads and infrastructures of our communities?

These are complex issues but none that can't be resolved by the power of sustained thinking, hard work and commitment. I realized long ago that if we didn't grab the bull by the horns, the bull would most certainly grab us and take us wherever it was heading. And so it went with New York State. And it was the source of my motivation to become a public servant. For far too long we have sustained an atmosphere that literally drove business and jobs out of our state, taking our young people and their families with them. Today, there's a new way of thinking in New York - one with an eye toward our children's futures.

We've passed a timely and balanced budget and are working hard toward getting New York's notorious taxes under control. Our efforts include a long overdue tax cap and mandate relief measures that allow local governments and school districts greater control and flexibility to find efficiencies to rein in costs. We're even moving forward on repealing the job-stifling MTA payroll tax that has put an extra burden on local employers. What this all means is that we're getting government out of the way so entrepreneurs and small business will once again find New York attractive. It's a common sense approach to jumpstarting our economy, creating meaningful jobs, and making New York the kind of place you move to, not away from.

It's not easy and it can't be done overnight. But with each job we create, each home we build, each young person we keep here, our future will be that much brighter. New York has got to get back in the business of generating hope and optimism.

So, to those who are graduating, I offer you my wishes for continued success and my promise to continue working for your bright futures.