



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Stephen M. Saland

2011 Legislative Session -- Moving New York Forward Again

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The State Legislature recently concluded one of the most successful sessions in recent history; a session highlighted by a budget that cut state spending, reduced taxes and helped point New York in a positive direction toward economic growth, job creation and prosperity. The newly-enacted State Budget was passed on-time, closed a \$10 billion deficit, reduced state spending, and did not raise a single tax or fee – marking a sharp departure of the past two years.

With new leadership in the State Senate and in the Governor's Office, we were able to take strong, decisive action on a wide array of important issues that will benefit our economy, taxpayers and our local community for years to come.

While the **marriage equality act** most assuredly captured the headlines throughout our state and beyond our borders, progress was made on a number of significant issues, including a long-sought **property tax cap**, a first and long overdue step on the road to greater **mandate relief** (it should be noted, I remain committed to my battle to make progress in removing costly, onerous mandates), **landmark ethics reform, job creation and energy savings initiatives.**

It was a productive and fulfilling session for me personally as well. More than half the bills I introduced were passed in the Senate this session – 43 in total.

Most notable are:

- bills repealing the MTA payroll tax which will ease an enormous financial burden that caused job losses and hurt businesses in Dutchess County;
- legislation which protects patients using prescription eye drops by ensuring continuity of treatment;
- bills eliminating or reducing unfunded and underfunded mandates imposed by the state on local governments and school districts;
- a measure expanding the DNA database requiring all individuals convicted of a felony or misdemeanor to submit a DNA sample;
- a bill to protect students from bullying and cyberbullying;
- and several bills that strengthen penalties and provide additional protections for children and families. In this same vein, throughout the session, I worked on several measures which strengthened the laws relating to domestic violence. With four recent tragic deaths relating to domestic violence in Dutchess County, advancement of these bills was a personal priority. Working closely with my Assembly colleagues, four of the domestic violence bills I sponsored passed in both houses this session.

While some of these issues were not taken up by the Assembly, I am confident that we can build on the successes of the 2011 Session when we reconvene in 2012.

Our successes this year were in large part a product of bipartisanship. Working with Governor Cuomo, the Senate was able to get state government pointed in the right

direction and establish a strong record of cutting spending and taxes and creating jobs. I hope to build on this record as we go forward. The taxpayers of our state deserve nothing less.