



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

State Mandate Relief Council Holds First Meeting

JACK M. MARTINS January 25, 2012

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Senator Martins Is Lone Member From Long Island

The New York State Mandate Relief Council, which was created as part of the tax cap legislation that went into law this year, met for the first time on Wednesday, January 25. Senator Jack M. Martins, the lone member from Long Island to sit on the 11-member council, said he is looking forward to working with his fellow council members to bring relief to local governments and school districts.

The council will be charged with reviewing mandates that are passed on to local governments and school districts. The elimination or modification of some of the regulations will result in costs savings for local governments and school district, which can then pass on the savings to taxpayers.

"The Mandate Relief Council will seek ways to relieve local governments and school districts from unfunded mandates - cost drivers fueling increased property taxes. I am looking forward to working with my fellow council members to craft measures that will deliver significant savings to our communities," said Senator Martins, chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Local Government. "The formation of this council to tackle mandate

relief, a subject that received only lip service in the past, is another example of New York State's government working for the taxpayers."

Council members can bring ideas for mandate relief up during the work sessions and public hearings the council plans on holding this year. Also, according to Larry Schwartz, chairman of the council and secretary to the Governor, there will be a website set up that will allow residents and local governments to submit a form to identify mandates that can possibly be reformed or eliminated. The council will then review those ideas, making mandate relief an interactive process with the state and local communities collaborating on ways to reduce regulations that local governments currently must expend tax dollars to comply with.

The State Legislature and the Governor worked together last year to get the ball rolling, but as Secretary Schwartz stated, more needs to be done. "Mandates on local governments and school districts have been a contributing factor on New York having some of the highest property taxes in the nation," he said.

Among some forms of mandate relief already proposed in the Governor's budget include a new pension tier for future public employees as well as the state taking over the growth in Medicaid expenses imposed on counties. However, the council will review additional initiatives designed to modify or reduce regulations that are no longer serving their purpose or may have become too cost prohibitive.