



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

## Martins Home Mortgage Safety Seminar Hosts Hundreds

JACK M. MARTINS March 12, 2012

| ISSUE: **HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

| COMMITTEE: **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**



Over 437 local residents packed the Elmont Public Library this past Saturday for Senator Jack Martins' "Home Mortgage Safety Seminar." The program, sponsored by Senator Martins, was a partnership with Attorney General Eric Schneiderman and Governor Andrew Cuomo's offices. Also participating in the seminar were Bethpage Federal Credit Union, Sovereign Bank, New York Communities for Change and Bank of America. Residents from Elmont, Franklin Square, Floral Park, South Floral Park, Westbury, New Cassell, Bellerose Terrace and

North Valley Stream packed the Elmont Library.

“The turnout for the seminar was beyond what we expected. The room was packed and people were lined up and down the hall. People came with outstanding questions and real issues that we can hopefully get them the help they need. As a result of the turnout, we will indeed be doing a follow up effort for those who could not make it,” said Senator Martins.

The seminar began with a roundtable discussion where Senator Martins, Attorney General Office Attorney Valerie Singleton and Max Dubin of Governor Cuomo’s Financial Services offices answered questions from audience members on general issues regarding home foreclosure, rescue scams, modification issues and concerns related to response times from banking institutions. In addition, first time homebuyer issues were explored on one on one appointment basis.

Questions were posed to the roundtable members from audience members who brought up issues they were personally tackling with banks and so-called rescue experts. Senator Martins would ask audience members “how many people in the room are facing this issue?” dozens of hands would raise. Attorney General’s staff would follow up and explore the issue further and complaint forms were filled out by audience members.

One resident told of a story how they would record the phone calls with a bank and that every time they would get a representative, the bank would offer another excuse or ask for the paperwork to be resent as it would be “lost.” Those issues were immediately tackled by the Governor and Attorney General’s offices.

“The most sobering part of this seminar is seeing how far we still have to go in this challenging economic times. Hundreds of people came on Saturday looking for help and are really struggling. We have to help them get through this,” said Senator Martins.

Over 70 community residents filed complaint forms with state officials regarding banks ignoring their mortgage applications for modification. More complaints were filed regarding rescue scams where residents received fliers in their doors offering hope for saving their homes when in actuality homeowners were signing up for disaster from fly-by-night schemes.

“The stories that homeowners told me on Saturday were shocking and very disturbing to say the very least,” said Senator Martins noting, “this seminar effort is a start in putting an end to our community being a victim of the foreclosure nightmare.”

At the conclusion of the roundtable, residents made appointments and spoke to representatives of banks, NY Communities for Change, the Attorney General and Governor Cuomo’s offices. Senator Martins met one on one with residents for nearly 2 hours in an effort point homeowners in the right direction.

Some residents attended the seminar as they are looking towards making their first home purchase. “This seminar not only tackled foreclosure issues, but it provided excellent information for first time home buyers. It gave them the ins and outs and offered a road map so that families can make good decisions on the most important purchase of their lives,” said Senator Martins.

As the session went on, residents streamed from table to table to have their questions and answered and receive information on their particular area of concern.