



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

Senate Passes Bills to Help Taxpayers

DEAN G. SKELOS April 17, 2012

On New York State's tax filing deadline, the state Senate today passed legislation that would expedite payment of income tax refunds and simplify STAR property tax relief filings for senior citizens.

A bill sponsored by Senator Carl L. Marcellino (R, Syosset) ensures prompt payment of a state income tax refund. Traditionally, the state Department of Taxation and Finance has held returns requesting refunds for up to two months, starting from when taxpayers file their return to when they may actually see the refund.

The bill (S.2631) requires the state to pay tax refunds within 30 days of the receipt of a taxpayer's return, unless there is a discrepancy in the return. In those cases, the state would provide written notice to the taxpayer and a date when the discrepancy would be resolved. If the state fails to take these steps, it would be liable to pay interest on the refund to the taxpayer.

“There is no legitimate reason for the state to hold on to New Yorkers’ money,” Senator Marcellino said. “If citizens do the right thing and file on time, the state has a responsibility to get the refunds out the door in a timely fashion. It shouldn’t take up to eight weeks to get these checks in the mail. I think the state can do better and this legislation will make sure they do.”

“Each day that the state holds onto a refund is another day when the individual deserving of that money cannot use it to meet their financial obligations or spur our economy,” Senate Majority Leader Dean G. Skelos said. “This bill increases the state’s accountability by creating an acceptable time frame for returning refunds back to the taxpayer.”

A bill sponsored by Senator Kemp Hannon (R-C-I, Garden City) would simplify the renewal process senior citizens follow when applying for the school tax relief exemption. The measure (S.1920) allows senior citizens previously approved for STAR exemptions and who have elected not to participate in the income verification program to file a simplified renewal application annually.

“The current renewal process for senior citizens receiving the STAR exemption is long and complex, especially in those cases where their income information remains the same,” said Senator Hannon. “My legislation will simplify the renewal application process, and will relieve both seniors and tax assessors of needless paperwork, wasted time, and unnecessarily expended energy.”

The bills have been sent to the Assembly.