



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

## New York State Senators Announce Bipartisan Task Force for Hurricane Sandy Recovery

DEAN G. SKELOS December 10, 2012



*Senator Malcolm Smith and Senator Andrew Lanza will Co-Chair*

As New York State begins large-scale rebuilding efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, Independent Democratic Conference Leader Senator Jeffrey D. Klein and Republican Conference Leader Senator Dean G. Skelos announced the formation of a bipartisan Senate task force charged with undertaking some of the recovery's biggest challenges. As federal

and state aid begins to materialize, task force members will play a pivotal role in developing the short and long-term plans that will help these communities get back on their feet. Each task force member represents one of New York State's hardest hit areas and is thus uniquely qualified to pinpoint those neighborhoods and businesses that are most in need.

Senator Andrew Lanza (R-Staten Island) and Senator Malcolm Smith (D-Queens) will co-chair the bipartisan task force. Task force members will include Senator Diane Savino (D-Staten Island/Brooklyn), Senator Charles J. Fuschillo Jr. (R-Merrick), Senator-Elect James Sanders, Jr. (D-Queens), Senator Jack Martins (R-Mineola), Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland), Senator Martin J. Golden (R-Brooklyn), Senator Joseph Addabbo Jr. (D-Queens) and Senator Lee Zeldin (R,C,I-Shirley).

The task force, which includes members from all three Senate conferences, will tour and hold hearings in hard hit communities across the New York metropolitan region.

Senator Jeffrey D. Klein said, "All of us here have seen first-hand how Hurricane Sandy's path of destruction cut across communities of all types. From the Bronx shoreline, to Breezy Point, and from Coney Island, to Rockland County, New York families are still suffering. Faced with a problem as momentous as this, it is absolutely essential that we come together as legislators to ensure that our hardest hit communities have a voice in how our state rebuilds. As our state's large-scale rebuilding efforts get underway, the Senate's Bipartisan Task Force on Hurricane Sandy Recovery will be a tireless advocate for every impacted community and will deliver real solutions to rebuild those communities that are most in need."

Senator Dean G. Skelos said, "The devastation from Hurricane Sandy has resulted in unprecedented challenges for communities throughout the New York City metropolitan region and Long Island. In my district, neighborhoods from Inwood to Baldwin sustained massive damage similar to what we are seeing here in the Rockaways, and six weeks after the storm residents are still trying to get their lives back together. The bipartisan Senate Task Force we are announcing today brings together Senators from both sides of the aisle who represent the hardest hit areas of New York to provide critical input to recovery efforts and to develop short and long term solutions to rebuild these communities."

The Bipartisan Senate Task Force for Hurricane Sandy Recovery has three major goals:

- Ø Identify areas most in need of recovery assistance.
- Ø Review rebuilding and storm planning policies to remove roadblocks and ensure better storm-preparedness.
- Ø Develop legislative solutions that will implement the forthcoming recommendations made by the NYS 2100 Commission, the NYS Respond Commission and the NYS Ready Commission – all established by Governor Cuomo in November.

Senator Andrew Lanza, co-chair of the Task Force, said, "Nearly two months after Hurricane Sandy wreaked havoc on Staten Island, thousands of my constituents and fellow New

Yorkers are still sifting through debris, struggling to repair extensive damages and fighting for resources to rebuild their homes and lives. As we determine the needs of these victims and rebuild our communities we must learn from our experiences to prepare for the future. I look forward to Co-Chairing this task force and improving New York State's emergency preparedness and response capabilities by crafting legislation that will ensure our critical systems and services are better prepared for natural disasters and other emergencies in the future."

Senator Malcolm Smith, co-chair of the Task Force, said, "All of us here today have lay witness to the terrible devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy. This deadly storm didn't make landfall in some far away place. It hit us right here, in our own backyards. As we've all seen today, there are families still without heat or hot water; we have children and elderly who are struggling to find a warm meal each night. These problems go beyond any political affiliation. They go beyond any single senate district. And yes, these problems are color blind. I am proud to stand here today with senate colleagues. We all recognize that in order to rebuild, we need to ensure that resources from Washington are directed to the hardest hit communities and that we are prepared for future challenging weather occurrences."

Senator Diane Savino said, "I would like to thank Senators Klein and Skleos for their leadership in creating the State Senate Taskforce on Hurricane Sandy. I look forward to working with my fellow committee members to ensure that the people of Staten Island and Brooklyn can recover from this storm as quickly as possible."

Senator Martins said, "This task force will clear the way to get our disaster response streamlined and working so our neighbors and local businesses can rebuild. We're going to listen, figure out what needs to be done and then make sure our communities have the resources they need to rebuild better than ever."

Senator Carlucci said, "The creation of a Senate Bipartisan Task Force in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy is an important step forward in helping to rebuild the lives of all New Yorkers affected by the storm. It is critical that my Senate colleagues and I hear directly from residents who were impacted throughout the Hudson Valley. By putting the politics aside and through our Senate hearings, we will be able to determine how we can provide the right tools and resources to rebuild a stronger New York."

Senator Golden stated, "Working together with my colleagues in the State Senate, we will begin the important work to review and analyze the city, state and federal response to Super Storm Sandy at a number of levels. We must evaluate the response from the perspective of housing, utility service restoration, mobilization of resources, flood zone designations and more. This committee's work will better prepare the hardest hit parts of my district including Gerritsen Beach, Sheepshead Bay and Manhattan Beach, in the event of such a storm in the future. New Yorkers both need and deserve this effort and I thank Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos for appointing me to this Committee."

Senator Joe Addabbo Jr. said, "As a third of my district still deals with the destruction of Sandy, I expect that the Senate Task Force for Hurricane Sandy will play a pivotal role in

identifying the needs of the affected communities and ensure that the federal funds received address those needs. I look forward to working with all my colleagues on the task force as we collectively move forward down the road to recovery."

Senator Zeldin said, "Through our efforts on this Task Force, we can help recover from the damage caused by Super Storm Sandy and best prepare for the future. Many of my constituents were greatly impacted by this devastating storm and we must now do everything in our power to help rebuild our communities throughout the NYC metropolitan area. There is an urgent need for state government, working with all other levels of government, to deliver short and long term solutions to challenges we face now and in the years and decades ahead."

Senator Fuschillo said, "Hurricane Sandy was one of the worst natural disasters in New York State's history. Thousands of my constituents sustained severe damage to their homes and businesses; some lost everything they had. For the communities affected by this storm, both in my Senate district and across the metropolitan area, the rebuilding and recovery process needs to happen as quickly and efficiently as possible. I look forward to working with my colleagues to help our communities recover from this devastating storm and improve New York's ability to prepare and respond to future disasters."

Senator-Elect Sanders said, "Hurricane Sandy was a once in a generation weather event which caught government, first responders, state utilities and our communities off guard. The eastern end of the Rockaway Peninsula was decimated; first by driving wind, rain and

flooding, and then by a prolonged absence of emergency and first responders, and the total lack of power. We spent nearly a month in the dark, threatening everything from our food supply to access to medication to our very security. With this task force, we are beginning the vital work of critically examining what went wrong and how city, state and federal officials can work together, not only to rebuild and strengthen our communities, but to ensure we are better prepared next time." [Senator-Elect Sanders was unable to attend today's press conference due to a previously scheduled commitment in Albany].