



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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From the Desk of Senator Jack Martins

JACK M. MARTINS June 18, 2013

| ISSUE: **EDUCATION, LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

| COMMITTEE: **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Dad's Lesson on Resilience

On Father's Day this past weekend I sat at the breakfast table with my four daughters, facing the whirlwind of their seemingly unconnected conversations, with my occasional attempts to join in gently dismissed at least a half-dozen times by sweet smiles and quiet chuckles. It reminded me of Mark Twain who wrote, "When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years." I guess that's nature's way – it takes time to truly appreciate parents, especially dads and their wisdom.

I received some of that wisdom myself when I shared some news with my dad this past week. I told him about the Model UN Team from Elmont Memorial High School who were selected by an International Committee to participate in the annual world-wide competition in Beijing, China. These ten students regularly clean up at competitions throughout the United States, really quite a feat as they've done so against all manner of schools, public and private, many with far more resources than theirs. Unfortunately, I explained, they need about \$40,000 to make the trip happen and that it was a tough nut to crack.

My father just stared at me blankly and asked, "And?" Then came that familiar, gentle strength. If students and their teachers worked that hard, and parents were doing the right thing too, he wondered how anyone could walk away now that the chips were down. He asked me pointedly, "How can they learn strength and perseverance if we don't teach it to them?" As usual, he's absolutely right and that's why I'm sharing it with you today.

I'll say it plainly: These students are phenomenally gifted young men and women who have overcome odds to become internationally recognized and it would be an absolute shame if Long Island, one of the wealthiest places in the wealthiest country in the world, couldn't find the resources or the spirit to send them to Beijing. Rich experiences like these are life-changing events and the bonds they make with future leaders from other countries could someday impact us all.

If at all possible, please consider a donation to their travel fund. Any gift, large or small, brings them a step closer to Beijing. What you spend today on that cup of coffee would make a world of difference.

And I'll go one step further: I especially urge local corporations and businesspeople, those whose resources have been made here on Long Island, to please consider giving back in this unique way. Please visit <http://www.gofundme.com/2kztzo> to make a secure donation. And thank you to all the dads and moms out there, like mine, who continually teach us the value of strength and perseverance.

Happy Father's Day to all our dads and good luck to our world beaters from Elmont!