



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terry Gipson

Op-Ed: End of Session and Our Work Ahead

TERRY GIPSON July 3, 2013



I promised I would go to Albany and work with anyone, Republican or Democrat, who was serious about creating jobs, reducing the cost of living and reforming our government. Through hard work, we were able to make great strides toward improving our communities in Dutchess and Putnam counties.

This year's timely budget included: \$800 million in tax relief for businesses, \$300 million in tax relief for hard working families, and additional funding for local school districts. Along with \$6 million for re-purposing the Beacon Correctional Facility, I worked to secure an

additional \$9 million in school aid beyond the proposed budget. After 10 years since first being proposed, I was able to deliver \$1 million to begin work on the Pudding Street Overpass in Putnam Valley.

I led the fight to immediately repeal the “18-a” utility surcharge over the next three years, saving hundreds of millions of dollars for local families, farms, and businesses. We were also able to restore \$90 million in funding to the Office for Persons With Developmental Disabilities so that those with developmental disabilities and their families can receive the services that they need and deserve. Additionally, I voted to repeal another piece of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority payroll tax for those who are self-employed, and I remain committed to a complete repeal of this tax.

It was not unexpected to see the status quo and special interests fight against my efforts as an outsider to change the culture in Albany. But I stood strong and labored to convince many of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to end the tradition of handing down unfunded mandates from Albany. As a former village trustee, I understand how difficult it is to keep property taxes low when Albany keeps asking municipalities to pay more. That’s why I remain dedicated to amending our state constitution to end these mandates and their burden on taxpayers.

Sadly, the series of corruption scandals in Albany this session proved at times worse than I expected. It’s more unfortunate evidence to support my long-held claim that Albany will not change until we elect more outsiders like me. That’s why I worked with Republican Assemblyman Kieran Lalor to craft a bi-partisan term limits bill to end the tradition of entrenched power that encourages corruption in our state. I also introduced legislation to strip convicted lawmakers of their pensions, and to stop politicians from using their campaign funds as a personal ATM. And let’s not forget my Vampire Voting Act which would require the Legislature to conduct its work in the light of day and establish greater

transparency.

What really disappointed me this session is that instead of leveling the playing field for women in New York, the Senate Majority Coalition watered down many important pieces of the Women's Equality Agenda. This session clarified that New York's fight for choice and women's equality is not over. I am pro-choice and steadfast in my belief that women should make their own choices about their health, and I will continue to fight for that right.

Being a reformer in Albany is not easy when the age-old power brokers and special interests are doing everything they can to keep going about their same old business. But I remain as committed as ever to making your voices heard and to holding the establishment accountable in my ongoing goal to bring about the changes that are necessary to put our community on the path to a prosperous and more affordable future.


