



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Senate Passes Three Griffo Sponsored Bills

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO June 10, 2014

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ALBANY - Sen. Joseph A. Griffo was the lead sponsor of three bills that today passed the State Senate.

- **S3907**: Shortens the time frame – from 1 year to 60 days – in which a meeting may be called to vote on consolidation of school districts after qualified voters have not voted in favor of consolidation. The bill passed, 40-17, unofficially. A companion bill, A2735, sponsored by Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi, D-Utica, is in the Assembly Education Committee.

“Consolidation can be an effective way to cut per-pupil costs while preserving all educational benefits. The state should show it supports consolidation, where practical, by limiting the wait times between votes,” said Griffo.

- **S6735**: Extends, for five years, the banking “wild card” law, which provides a way to keep the state banking charter competitive with the federal banking charter. The bill passed, 57-0, unofficially. The companion bill, A9057, passed the Assembly on March 24.

“We want to make sure that banks are not penalized for operating under a state charter,” said Griffo, who is chairman of the Senate Banks Committee. “This bill gives banks under state charter the same ability to quickly take advantage of new expanded powers and opportunities granted by federal regulators and keep them competitive. At the same time, it’s important for us to keep the sunset provision so we can ensure this bill is still appropriate when it comes up for renewal again.”

The “wild card” law has been extended several times since its original enactment in 1997. This bill would extend the sunset date from Sept. 10, 2014 to Sept. 10, 2019.

- **S6655**: Extends, for two years, the provisions of the Oneida Indian Nation real property tax depository fund. The bill passed, 57-0, unofficially. A companion bill, A8895, sponsored by Assemblyman Brindisi, is in the Assembly Rules Committee.

This bill protects Oneida County, as the guarantor of unpaid property taxes, until all property taxes are paid on most Oneida Indian Nation land. If enacted, this law would be repealed on June 30, 2016.

The Senate passed five bills June 2 which had Senator Griffo as the lead sponsor. That legislation would provide educations to military veterans, licensing for those that work with the visually impaired and assistance to Clarkson University. The legislation would also improve transparency by setting up a “one-stop shop” for information on government programs and initiatives.

The bills were:

- **S6720**: Authorizes the Village of Norwood to enter into a lease agreement with Clarkson University for municipally owned waterfront park land. The college and a non-profit,

Grateful Oars, are planning on building a boathouse on a piece of Norwood Recreation Park. The bill passed, 59-0. It passed the state Assembly June 9 and is headed to the governor for approval or disapproval.

"I'm pleased to be able to assist Clarkson University and the village board with this land purchase and hope to see rowing activity coming from that area soon," said Griffo.

- **S3554**: Allows a Gold Star Mother to keep one distinctive license plate, for commemorative purposes only, upon surrender of such distinctive plates. The bill passed, 59-0. A companion bill, A4459, is now in the Assembly Transportation Committee.

"Gold Star Mothers have lost their son or daughter in sacrifice to our country," said Griffo. "My colleagues and I were inspired by the plight of Ethel Barnes, an octogenarian who was told by the DMV that she couldn't keep the license plate that honored her only son after she opted to stop driving. This is a small gesture of 'thanks' to Gold Star Mothers and a way to honor those who were lost in battle."

- **S1963**: Allows those with military service and an honorable discharge to attend classes at the State University of New York and the City University of New York on a tuition-free audit basis. The bill passed, 59-0. A companion bill, A1808, is now in Assembly Higher Education Committee.

"Too many veterans are struggling to find work after leaving the military. This is a low-pressure way for veterans to jumpstart a second career by giving them an opportunity to learn more about a particular subject of interest and possibly pursue an education in that field. This is the same consideration we give to individuals 60 years of age and older, and I'm pleased to help extend it to our veterans," said Griffo.

- **S2233A**: Creates ResultsNY.gov, which would be a new single access website that provides data and statistics that allow the public to compare the state's performance regionally and nationally in relation to the economy, education, public safety, energy, housing and the environment. The bill passed, 59-0. A companion bill, A7797, is in the Assembly Governmental Operations Committee.

“Transparency and feedback are the cornerstones of effective governing. This website will help the public determine if our tax dollars are being well spent and how individual government programs are addressing specific needs, both short-term and long-term. It will also give New Yorkers the opportunity to help us identify duplicative or inefficient programs and jettison them,” said Griffo.

- **S3558D**: Creates licensing for vision rehabilitation professionals who work with the blind or partially sighted on independent functioning at home, school, work or the community. The bill passed, 59-0. A companion bill, A3597C, is in the Assembly Higher Education Committee.

“As a person becomes visually impaired – whether gradually through age or suddenly as the result of an accident – they need someone to help them learn how to adapt to their new disability. However, doctors are remiss to refer their patients to unlicensed professionals, no matter how well intended. We need a licensing system for vision rehabilitation professionals that tells patients: This person is educated, trained and accredited – and can be trusted with helping you in the next stage of life,” said Griffo.