



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

This Season, Shop Local

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

When it comes to the holiday shopping season, the couple weeks before Christmas can feel like crunch time. While online retailers and big box stores can offer seemingly endless options, it often times can be a struggle to find the perfect gift. As you continue to check items off your list, I encourage you to shop local this holiday season.

According to statistics, shopping at “small” businesses is anything but. In fact, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration, last year, nearly half of all consumers spent an estimated \$5.7 billion at small businesses across the country. Here's a look at some other numbers that illustrate exactly how shopping small is having a big impact on communities throughout our country:

Creating jobs: Did you know that when you shop local, you're helping to create employment opportunities for friends, neighbors and others who relocate to our region? It's estimated that small businesses are responsible for employing roughly 77 million Americans. In addition, according to the Small Business Administration, since the recession, small businesses have created two out of three new private sector jobs.

Protecting our environment: Business owners aren't the only ones benefitting when you shop local. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, our environment does too. It's estimated that industrial pollution is responsible for nearly 50 percent of the pollution in the United States. According to the EPA, shopping locally helps to reduce pollution by cutting down on processing, packaging and transportation waste.

A bigger ripple effect: When you shop at small businesses, the effects in your community are far reaching, with most of the money you spend and most of the taxes staying local. It's estimated that for every \$100 you spend at a local small business, roughly \$70 goes back into your community. In comparison, when

you spend \$100 at a big box retailer, about \$50 stays local.

As your state senator, I'm working to cut red tape and spearhead initiatives that support local small businesses and the overall economy. If you'd like to help, it's important to note that you don't necessarily have to spend big to have a big impact. It's estimated that if just half of the U.S. employed population spent \$50 monthly in locally owned small businesses, it would generate more than \$42 billion in revenue. As the season continues, I hope you'll consider shopping small when it comes to buying all you need for the holidays.