



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Saving Taxpayers' Dollars by Consolidating our Local Governments

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Saving your tax dollars is one of my top priorities. That is why I recently voted “yes” on a bill to empower citizens and local officials to significantly reduce the size and cost of their local governments. The bill, which I cosponsored, passed the New York State Senate and Assembly, and was signed into law by the Governor.

The new law, also known as the “New NY Government Reorganization and Citizen Empowerment Act,” will empower citizens, local officials and local governments to reorganize outdated or less efficient districts by establishing procedures for consolidation. It will provide New Yorkers with the ability to determine the size, scope and cost of their own government entities.

New York State currently has more than 10,521 local government entities, which in some cases, provide layers of overlapping structure. The law provides for a uniform method for all towns, villages and special districts to reorganize, and it allows citizens and local officials to decide for themselves whether or not they would like to consolidate.

When the law takes effect, it will allow us to significantly reduce the size and cost of local government, while increasing efficiency, cutting government waste and, most importantly, reducing the property tax burden.

Although the law does not take effect right away, there is an easy way that you can get involved right now. Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, who first initiated the legislation, has introduced a new website in an effort to promote consolidation. The website explains the new law, and allows local elected officials and the public to take action toward consolidation. It offers interactive maps, sample petitions, interactive forums for citizens to connect, and easy-to-follow guidelines on how citizens can help to influence their local governments.

Our community has witnessed the success of the Clay police merger, which reportedly saved taxpayers \$1.3 million in the first year. I believe that there is no reason why we can't reproduce similar results in other areas of local government.

If you are interested in local government consolidation and in reducing your property taxes, please visit reformnyny.gov. Your participation in this initiative could help to make a positive difference in your community.