



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## A RETURN TO COMMON SENSE

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO June 13, 2010

Growing up in a working class family with Mom, Dad, and my two brothers, we didn't have the best of everything. We did, however, learn very early how to stretch a dollar and the value of hard work and sacrifice. We never felt deprived. When times were tough, my parents, especially my mother, who was the money manager of the family, taught us invaluable and common sense lessons about ways to save money.

New York State could take a lesson from my mother. Times are tough in New York State and it's time to use common sense when it comes to state spending.

Not too long ago, a corrections officer suggested a common sense way to save money in the state's prison system. He offered simple, nutritionally balanced suggestions on ways to save on the meals that the state provides to the inmate population. One of his suggestions was to substitute bread instead of hot dog and hamburger rolls, which are more expensive. He also suggested that instead of sugared drinks like Kool-aid that the State serve water with meals and serving hard-boiled eggs instead of deviled ones. These small substitutions, in addition to being healthier, would save New York State over a million dollars!

Of course, switching from rolls to bread will not solve New York State's \$9.2 billion deficit, but the point is that there are savings to be found in every Department and Agency in the State and you don't always have to look very hard to find them. Common sense suggestions like these should be discussed as a part of the budget negotiations - negotiations that sadly, are NOT taking place.

Shockingly, open meetings on the budget have been halted in Albany. The legislators from New York City, who currently control both the Assembly and Senate, continue to violate the law and refuse to hold the public budget conference committee meetings that could bring an end to the budget stalemate.

In the meantime, taxes and spending are spiraling out of control. Local taxpayers, already hit hard with the high cost of living in New York are suffering. Layoffs have already begun to hit business, industry, education and all levels of the private sector. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be an end in sight to the budget crisis.

The New York City legislators who control the budget process are the same people who forced last year's New York State budget through with the largest tax and spending increases in State history! Last year's closed door negotiations resulted in spending

increases of more than \$12 billion and imposed over \$8.5 billion in new taxes - taxes that drove up the costs of electricity, health insurance, automobile registration and recreational fees.

Once again, legislators from New York City are hiding behind closed doors, reviewing the budget in secret and without input from the public. They don't want your interests to be represented or protected!

We are now facing our 6th week without a New York State budget! One party rule with Governor Paterson, the State Assembly and State Senate has taken us out of balance and has proven to be a disaster! The people of New York State deserve better.

There **are** many ways to reduce spending. New York State can start by weeding out the waste and abuse in its multi-billion dollar welfare and Medicaid programs. New York State can consolidate services and eliminate highly overpaid administrative staff positions in all levels of government.

These suggestions should be a part of the budget process and would be if the budget conference committee meetings - meetings that are required by law - were actually taking place!

There are solutions to the problems that are plaguing our State. Reduce the taxes that are strangling New York property owners, cut spending, and provide business incentives that will encourage job growth and development. I will continue to fight for the common sense solutions that are basic to every successful household like the one I grew up in, and essential to our State's economic recovery.