



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## HELP MY MANDATE WORKING GROUP CUT COSTS

PATTY RITCHIE September 19, 2011

A major accomplishment this year as your State Senator was the historic two percent property tax cap Governor Andrew Cuomo and the legislature passed this year.

After 40 years of talking about holding the line on property taxes, legislators from both sides of the aisle worked with the governor to provide taxpayers with some degree of relief from one of the biggest problems facing New York State's economic recovery.

This week, the Senate appointed me to serve on a new bipartisan task force on government efficiency that will help investigate and identify wasteful spending in state government.

As any local official will tell you, cutting waste and holding the line on property taxes is just one part of the solution. The other part is reducing the costly state-imposed regulations and requirements that Albany has spent decades imposing on local and county governments and school districts which have resulted in New Yorkers paying among the highest taxes in the nation.

That's why I helped pass historic mandate reform that repealed over \$125 million in unfunded costs to local governments and school districts. It's also why I voted to reject dozens of new mandates that were originally included in the state budget that would have raised costs to school districts and local governments.

I also helped pass a reform that I think will pay off with big dividends to hard pressed Central and Northern New York property taxpayers — the creation of a Legislative and Executive Mandate Relief Council with sweeping powers to repeal or modify the most burdensome mandates that are identified by local governments.

Last week, I appointed nine current and past local government and school district leaders to serve on a special, nine-member, working group to help me identify mandates that should be repealed or reformed. I will bring the group's recommendations to the statewide Council to make sure the unique needs of Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence County are considered by the statewide council.

By bringing together a cross-section of local government leaders from across my Senate district, we can help Albany realize there are real measures we can take to help local governments and school districts reduce their operating costs.

I would like to publicly thank the members of my working group, co-chaired by Town of Clayton Supervisor Justin Taylor and St. Lawrence County Legislator Kevin Acres.

The members include Peter FitzRandolph, the former Finance Committee chair of the St. Lawrence County Board of Legislators; Scott Gray, Jefferson County Legislator; William Lynch, Superintendent of Fulton City Schools; Jamie Moesel, Superintendent of South Jefferson Central Schools; Vicki Mullen, Oswego Town Supervisor; Peggy Manchester, Mayor of the Village of Lacona; and Jack Zeh, President of the Heuvelton School Board.

I invite you to offer your ideas to the members of my working group.

By working together, we can find ways to help identify and reform the unfunded mandates that have fueled the unprecedented spending sprees at all levels of government that have cost the Empire State so many businesses, so many jobs, so many families and so many of

our most precious resource – our young people.