



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

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SUSAN SERINO October 13, 2015

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POUGHKEEPSIE, NY—New York State Senator Sue Serino wants the Hudson Valley to be made a priority when it comes to State initiatives and investments, so on Tuesday October 13th, she invited Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan to tour her Senate District ahead of the upcoming Legislative Session.

“For the past couple of years, our area has been passed over as the State sent billions of dollars to New York City and Western New York,” said Senator Serino. “Some of the biggest decisions that get made during the Legislative Session are already being talked about, and my job is to make sure that our area features prominently in those conversations. Bringing Senator Flanagan here, to the district, where he can see our potential—and our challenges—first-hand is just one of the ways I’m working to do that.”

Senate Majority Leader John J. Flanagan said: “It is a pleasure to join Senator Sue Serino and other local officials for an informative and detailed tour of the assets that can be found in the Hudson Valley and discuss how we can better utilize them to create new jobs and grow our economy. Senate Republicans are working very hard to ensure that every region of the state is treated fairly and equitably, enabling us to bring about new opportunities for every New York family. I’m optimistic that working with Senator Serino we can capitalize on the positive momentum that is evident in Poughkeepsie and throughout the entire Hudson Valley.”

With the focus of the visit centered on economic development, Senators Serino and Flanagan were accompanied throughout the day by local representatives, businesspeople and community leaders who helped paint a picture of the challenges the area faces, as well as the various ways in which the local community can drive New York’s economy.

Dutchess County Executive Marcus Molinaro had the opportunity to discuss multiple economic development initiatives underway in the County and to show Senator Flanagan how the closure of the Hudson Valley Psychological Center has increased costs and left a detrimental gap in important services.

Molinaro said, “The closure of Hudson River Psychiatric Center and other state facilities in Dutchess County has created unique mental health challenges in our community. Dutchess County Government has needed to fill the gap in mental health services for those

abandoned by the closures and it has come at substantial cost to the County and its taxpayers. We are grateful to Senator Serino and Senate Majority Leader Flanagan for recognizing our challenges and their willingness to assist Dutchess County in providing innovative mental health services to those who need them."

Throughout the day, Senator Serino placed a particular emphasis on the importance of rebuilding the City of Poughkeepsie saying, *"Revitalizing the City of Poughkeepsie is paramount to our area's success and with its position as a gateway from NYC to the rest of Upstate New York, it has the potential to play a significant role in driving the State's economy as a whole. With smart economic investment and development initiatives, and with the help of partners like Senator Flanagan, we can absolutely transform Poughkeepsie into the economic engine it was always meant to be."*

Ron Hicks, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Planning and Economic Development echoed that point saying, "The City of Poughkeepsie provides us with our greatest opportunity to transform the economy in our region. Our work on the Waterfront Redevelopment Strategy will help redevelop the urban center to attract millennials and entrepreneurs while revitalizing our Main Street and neighborhoods to make the City of Poughkeepsie the center of the Hudson Valley region it once was."

The importance of tourism to the Hudson Valley economy was a major focus of the day as well and Elizabeth Waldstein-Hart, Executive Director for the Walkway Over the Hudson, was on hand to show Senator Flanagan just how much the Walkway itself has transformed the area since opening in 2009.

Waldstein-Hart said, "Tourism and economic development go hand in hand, so we are delighted to have Senators Flanagan and Serino here to see first-hand what a vital role the Walkway plays in the area's growth. The Walkway draws hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, from the United States and around the world, contributing to the revitalization of the Mid-Hudson Valley. With the continued support of our elected officials, we will continue grow to the benefit of the region and our State."

The day ended at the Cornell (Marist) Boathouse where Dr. Dennis Murray, President of Marist College and Co-Chair of the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council (MHEDC) was on hand to share with Senator Flanagan his extensive knowledge on our area's economic development potential saying,

"We are delighted to welcome Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan to our beautiful and historic Hudson River Valley. Through our work with elected officials and business leaders, this region is poised for significant growth and major contributions to the economy of New York State. We look forward to showing and discussing many of the exciting things happening in our area and appreciate Senator Flanagan taking time from his busy schedule to visit with us."

Senator Serino concluded by thanking all of those involved in the day and noting Senator Flanagan's drive to understand the area's unique needs, *"Our area has the potential to be a significant economic engine for the State, but we need partners at every level to make that vision a reality. Senator Flanagan's visit today signifies his willingness to make our area a priority and I very much appreciate the active approach he has taken as Leader to understand the unique needs of New Yorkers across the State. Thank you to everyone who helped us send a clear message that we stand ready and able to help move New York forward."*