



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daphne Jordan

Studying New York's growing divide: Senator Daphne Jordan introduces legislation to study whether upstate and downstate should be split into two separate entities

SENATOR DAPHNE JORDAN February 20, 2019

| ISSUE: **PROTECTING TAXPAYERS, UPSTATE, NEW YORK STATE**



Albany, NY – As the New York story becomes more and more “a tale of two states” driven by a growing cultural, economic and political divide, upstate Senator Daphne Jordan (R,C,I,Ref-Halfmoon) has introduced legislation (Senate Bill S.3814) that would study whether upstate and downstate should be split into two separate entities.

“Whether it’s the issue of gun control, the DREAM Act, taxes and spending, parity in school or infrastructure funding, or even the choice for governor, the deepening divide – cultural, economic and political – between upstate and downstate has grown more pronounced every year. Many are asking whether both regions would be better off as separate entities,” Senator Jordan said.

“My legislation would address this by creating a working group that would study — and I emphasize study — the short and long-term economic ramifications, including economic opportunities, of splitting the state. As such, the bill I sponsor is a step toward establishing a long-needed study to help answer these important questions,” Senator Daphne Jordan stated.

Senator Jordan sponsors Senate Bill S.3814, legislation that would establish a working group within the Office of the State Comptroller to study the process and ramifications of separating upstate and downstate New York into two separate states.

As noted in Senator Jordan’s bill memo for S.3814, the State of New York is a very large and very diverse place, with many distinct cultural, economic, and historical regions. However, one set of distinctions is abundantly clear, both on paper and in the minds of New Yorkers – that there is an “upstate” region and a “downstate” region, and that these two regions have extremely divergent political and social views. As these views continue to diverge, calls for these two regions to “part ways,” have grown louder. Many, both upstate and downstate, have questioned whether these regions would be better off separately.

Senator Jordan’s bill would help to resolve these questions and would inform the Governor and Legislature on how to proceed. The legislation would create a working group that would study the short and long-term economic ramifications, including economic opportunities, of splitting the state. It would also examine the legal ramifications and precedents for dividing the State into two parts and would determine the “up-front cost” of doing so, such as creating two new State government apparatuses.

The language of Senator Jordan’s bill uses a definition of “downstate” as Nassau, Rockland, Suffolk, and Westchester Counties as well as New York City. While there is considerable debate about the dividing line between the two regions, this area is not only the consensus boundaries of the region but is also the most prominent statutory dividing line. Part K of Chapter 54 of the Laws of 2016, the minimum wage law, provides that these counties are part of downstate.

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2019-S3814

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- Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Establishes a working group within the office of the state comptroller to study the process and ramifications of separating upstate and downstate New York into two separate states

February 15, 2019

In Senate Committee **Finance**

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Do you support this bill?