



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Statement from Senator Seward

JEFF BISHOP, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR January 20, 2020



ONEONTA, 01/20/20 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) today announced that he will be retiring at the end of 2020 and not seeking re-election.

“I have decided not to seek reelection in 2020 and will retire from the senate when my current term, my 17th, expires at the end of the year. While I have responded well to cancer treatments, my physicians have advised me that treatments will continue for the foreseeable future limiting my ability to maintain the rigorous schedule needed to campaign for re-election. This is the right decision for my health, my family, and the people of the 51st Senate District.

“I want to stress that this decision is in no way related to majority or minority standing in the senate. I have effectively served under both scenarios and have always fought for the best interests

of my constituents no matter the party in power - which is exactly what I will continue to do for the remainder of my term.

“I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in the state senate and sincerely thank the voters for their support and confidence. The sacred trust bestowed in me by those I have had the privilege to represent has always been foremost on my mind.

“My family and I also want to offer our sincere thanks to the great many well-wishers for the cards, prayers, and positive messages we have received over the past few months during my cancer treatment. The encouraging sentiments mean a great deal.

“Throughout my time in the state senate I have focused on improving the lives of those I represent – advancing legislation, securing state grants for key community needs, and working directly with constituents in need of help. I have been blessed to work with many great individuals both at the Capitol and at home and will cherish those strong partnerships.

“There will be plenty of time to reminisce about the accomplishments, but there is still work ahead. As I wrap up my senate career, I will continue to focus on the issues and concerns people express to me every day and I look forward to a few additional success stories.

“My commitment to our region will continue and I look forward to further service in the future.”

Senator James L. Seward was first elected to the state senate in 1986 and is currently serving his 17th term.

Senator Seward began his senate career as chairman of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee. Among his major achievements in that role was enactment of the "Power for Jobs" program, helping retain and create thousands of New York jobs.

In 1999, Senator Seward assumed chairmanship of the Senate Insurance Committee and immediately set out to develop state policy to help consumers and strengthen New York's leadership in this vital segment of the state's financial services industry. He has fought to broaden health insurance coverage, lower costs for workers and small business owners, and

enact key reforms.

Currently, Senator Seward serves as ranking member of the influential Senate Finance Committee. Senator Seward brings veteran leadership and an upstate viewpoint to the committee – tasked with conducting public hearings on the governor’s budget proposal and guiding development of the final plan.

Senator Seward has been a consistent advocate for education, securing state aid for local school districts to offset rising taxes and expand technology and special education initiatives. He was an original sponsor of the STAR school tax relief program and has championed numerous property tax relief proposals including the property tax cap.

An advocate for business growth, Senator Seward has always been a strong proponent of local initiatives. He has delivered state grants to support improvement projects throughout the region and has been a longstanding partner in local economic development efforts. He has forged strong partnerships with economic development agencies and local government officials to create and retain jobs.

Senator Seward has advanced key agriculture bills and has consistently been named to the New York Farm Bureau’s “Circle of Friends.” The New York Rollover Protection (ROPS) Rebate Program is among the programs Senator Seward has helped support to ensure farmer safety. He is a “Distinguished 4-H Alumnus,” the first documented New York honoree listed in the national directory.

Senator Seward previously served as chairman of the Senate Task Force on Volunteer Emergency Services, where he was instrumental in establishing a low interest loan program for the capital needs and equipment purchases of voluntary fire departments and emergency squads. He has won funding increases for the program and for the state fire

academy in order to improve training for firefighters. He has also served as chairman of the Senate Task Force on State and Local Emergency Preparedness following the September 11, 2001, attacks on New York City, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania.

As a long standing member of the Senate Higher Education Committee, Senator Seward continues to work closely with colleges and universities throughout his senate district. He has won state aid to assist with major capital improvements at SUNY Cobleskill, Cortland and Oneonta, additional campus enhancements, and the creation of innovative programs to help our next generation of leaders receive the education they need to succeed.

Senator Seward has also been a long-standing friend of local libraries. He has obtained state grants to facilitate technological and accessibility upgrades to help libraries evolve with the times and continue to serve the public. He has routinely received high marks from the New Yorkers for Better Libraries for his support of libraries.

A native of Otsego County, Senator Seward attended Oneonta public schools and graduated from Hartwick College with a B.A. degree in political science. He also studied at the Nelson Rockefeller Institute of SUNY Albany. In 1999, Hartwick College honored Senator Seward with an honorary Doctor of Laws degree.