



NEW YORK STATE SENATE NEWS

Senator 47th Senate District

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Griffo: Late State Budget Shows Need for Reform Convention

(Utica) - Senator Joseph A. Griffo (R-IP-C, Rome) today voiced outrage that New York State is starting its 2010-2011 fiscal year without a budget in place.

“For months, the people of New York, especially its private sector, have been pleading for less spending, for lower taxes, and for structural reforms to make government work right. The answers to his budget crisis have been clear for months: spend less, tax less and restructure government to live with less for years to come,” Griffo said. “Instead of action, we have had closed-door meetings among the Senate Majority Leadership. There have been no conference committees to discuss ideas and resolve differences. There has been no open debate so that the people of New York can see what these power brokers are up to. I am very frankly disgusted with a system that refuses to change its ways.”

Earlier this week, Griffo opposed a measure that allowed the Legislature to go into recess and miss its budget adoption deadline. “Deadlines need to be abided by and met,” Griffo said from the Senate floor when explaining his vote against the government expenditure extension on Monday. “And while I respect an individual’s choice to observe religious holidays, I’m sure that New Yorkers didn’t expect the Legislature and Governor to take the whole week off without doing everything possible to get a budget in place.”

“The General Budget Conference Committee meeting held a week ago was a charade,” Griffo emphasized. “Afterwards, it appears the Senate Democrat Majority Conference simply shrugged their shoulders and decided to take time off. Well, I am urging the people of New York to use this ‘downtime’ while the Legislature is once again mired in inaction, to join me in taking action.” Griffo said the budget debacle points up the need for a Reform Convention he has proposed to rewrite Albany’s rulebook. “The system is not the solution,” Griffo stressed. “The system is a dysfunctional disgrace that must be overhauled before even more spending; more taxes and more bad decisions are forced upon the people of New York.”

“My Bill, S.6093, will accomplish this goal by creating a limited Constitutional Convention empowered to focus on this one critical, essential issue. A one-issue convention has a chance to produce results without being sidetracked, the fate of most of New York’s attempts to fix its Constitution. Since coming to the Senate in 2007, I have proposed multiple reform efforts. Some have been approved. Many are getting increased support as frustration builds around the state for change. However, I have come to believe that there is no short-term quick fixes that will make state government operate properly. This mess is so deep, so vast and so damaging to the people that we need to rebuild the way the state operates from the ground up through a special, limited Constitutional Convention to deal with this one issue.”

Griffo said a Reform Convention can establish:

1. Term limits to prevent anyone from building a web of power that corrupts the system;
2. A provision for recall to remind every elected official that the people are in charge;
3. The right to put people-driven initiatives on the ballot;
4. Reforms to close loopholes that let leaders have too much power and that put too much business into the back room behind closed doors.
5. A Convention that requires its members to be average citizens, not politicians.

“My proposal to create a limited Constitutional Convention for Reform gives New York the hope for a new start. I believe it is the best hope to energize democracy so that state government will once again belong to the people, and I strongly urge every media outlet and every elected official to take action now.”