

NEWS FROM  
**Senator Chris Jacobs**  
REPRESENTING THE 60TH NEW YORK SENATE DISTRICT



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**JACOBS SECURES PASSAGE OF MANDATE RELIEF BILL**  
*Constitutional amendment would prevent Albany from forcing  
unfunded mandates on localities, school districts*

(Buffalo, NY) – New York State Senator Chris Jacobs announced that he has secured passage of legislation calling for a constitutional amendment that would prevent state government from forcing any more unfunded mandates onto the backs of local governments. The bill, S8400, was approved this week with wide bi-partisan support by a vote of 53-8.

“For decades local governments across Western New York have been unfairly burdened by the crushing weight of mandates from Albany with no relief in sight,” said Jacobs. “The result has been counties, town and village governments and school districts either raising property taxes or cutting local services that are important to their citizens. This bill and the constitutional amendment that follows will put an end to this practice of passing the buck,” the Senator continued.

Jacobs’ bill tackles the unfunded mandate problem by first requiring the legislature to create a council on local mandates. Any provision of law that is determined by this council to be an unfunded mandate will cease to be mandatory, and its enforcement or implementation will be voluntary for the governmental entity affected.

The New York State Association of Counties has estimated that state mandates consume more than 90 percent of the property taxes collected outside New York City. Statewide, mandate-driven costs exceed a staggering \$10 billion annually. Currently, there are no constitutional prohibitions against unfunded mandates and no mechanism for local governments to challenge their imposition.

Joining Jacobs at the press conference were representatives from county, city and town governments, as well as school districts, from across the 60<sup>th</sup> Senate District. Orchard Park Town Supervisor Patrick Keem is the President of the Erie County Association of Governments. He praised Jacobs for passage of the bill and the strong bi-partisan support that accompanied it.

“The need for mandate reform knows no political parties and no municipal boundaries,” Supervisor Keem said. “Shrinking revenues have forced all of us in local government to prioritize our spending and find ways to stretch dollars. State government should be our partner in this effort, not our adversary, and I thank Senator Jacobs for his leadership on this critical reform.”

Senator Jacobs also noted that when cash-strapped entities are forced to turn to already overburdened taxpayers, living and working in upstate New York becomes increasingly more unaffordable.

“The property tax has long been recognized as the most onerous of New York State’s taxes, particularly in Western New York,” said Jacobs. “At a time when we are working so hard and investing so much into improving our economic climate, we need to recognize that no serious property tax relief can be achieved without mandate relief,” he concluded.

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