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Assemblyman

Robin Schimminger

Reports to You

SPRING 2010

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DIFFICULT TIMES FAR FROM OVER

Dear Friend,

Another extended state budget process is underway, and we in the State Legislature have our work cut out for us. I think we would all agree that we cannot spend, borrow or tax at the rate we have in the past, and difficult decisions will need to be made to get state finances under control. This assessment of the situation may not be welcomed by everyone, but it is a reality that points us in the right direction as we move forward.

While much work lies ahead of us, I thought you might also be interested in an update on some of the new laws and programs that have already been adopted, which may have an impact on you and your family and friends.

I hope this information is helpful to you, and, as always, I welcome your input.

Sincerely,

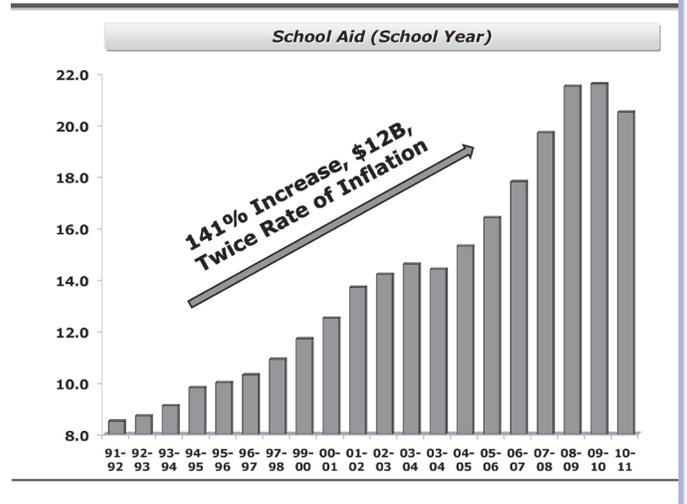
These are trying times, and the 2010-11 Executive Budget proposed by Governor Paterson reflects the fact that the difficulties in our economy are far from over. Against this challenging reality, I continue to make it my priority to work to control state spending and promote economic and job growth, and I remain focused on the need to change Albany.

Families and senior citizens here at home have been forced to make tough choices and now is the time for state government to follow suit. It will not be easy – there is no quick fix or easy answer, but we must get New York on a path toward financial stability.

The Governor's \$134 billion Executive Budget came in approximately 0.6 percent higher than last year's enacted 2009-10 state budget, which was 8.7 percent higher than the prior year's. Among the Governor's major budget proposals were:

- A proposed \$1.1 billion or five percent reduction in school aid. Even after this reduction, the Governor noted that overall school aid spending would still represent a \$6.1 billion or 42 percent increase comparative to 2003-04.

School Aid in Historical Perspective



This graph measuring billions of dollars was included in the Governor's 2010-11 budget presentation to show the comparative impact of his proposed school aid reduction for 2010-11.

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DIFFICULT TIMES FAR FROM OVER

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- \$1 billion in Medicaid and health care savings coupled with \$240 million in higher assessments on health care providers.
- More than \$1 billion in state agency operations spending reductions, such as closing or reducing hours/services at state parks and historic sites.
- \$1 billion in tax and fee increases, including a new excise tax of about one penny per ounce on liquid and powdered sugared beverages (\$423 million) and a \$1 per pack increase in the cigarette tax (\$218 million).

- Reforms based on the UB2020 initiative that would give all SUNY campuses the flexibility they seek to thrive academically and become centers of job creation. At the same time, aid to SUNY colleges and community colleges would be cut by \$95 million and \$57 million, respectively.

The reality is that New York can't afford to keep spending at the rate it does. I voted against the final 2009-10 state budget and this year's one-house Assembly budget proposal for 2010-11 because we can not continue to tax or borrow our way out of this crisis - we must get spending under control. This will require difficult and painful choices. It won't be easy, but it's the responsible thing to do.

A LOOK AT OTHER STATES

New York State is not alone when it comes to a challenging upcoming fiscal year and a looming 2010-11 budget deficit. According to *The Capitol* newspaper, states across the country face difficult times ahead.

For example:

- ✓ **California – \$52.1 billion deficit** - Furloughed its workers for three days a month, completely cut its domestic violence shelter program and maternal, child and adolescent health programs, plus cut nearly all funding for HIV/AIDS patient services, and the University of California is increasing tuition by 32 percent.
- ✓ **Illinois – \$14.3 billion deficit** - Medicaid recipients have a spending cap of \$10,000 per year in inpatient hospital

bills, limited lab and X-ray procedures to eight per person, per year, and eliminated occupational, physical and speech therapy services.

- ✓ **New Jersey – \$11 billion deficit** - Proposed cuts to state school aid, eliminating it entirely in some districts, after-school programs may be cut completely.
- ✓ **Washington – \$6.2 billion deficit** - The poorest enrollees in the state health plan will pay double their current premiums after an overall increase of 70 percent.
- ✓ **Florida – \$6 billion deficit** - Tuition at all 11 public universities increased by 15 percent. The state may eliminate all funding to public libraries.

RESPECTING FAMILY VALUES

The N.Y. State Family Health Care Decisions Act (FHCDA) was enacted earlier this year. The FHCDA, a measure I co-sponsored and advocated for, allows a family member to make health care decisions, including decisions about the withholding or withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment, on behalf of a family member who has lost his or her ability to make such decisions.

Without a statute such as the FHCDA, the common law of New York State has provided that life-sustaining treatment cannot be

withdrawn or withheld from an individual who has lost the capacity to make such decisions, unless clear and convincing evidence can be produced to show that the individual would have declined treatment if competent. While a health care proxy can provide the means to have a patient's wishes carried out, many people do not prepare a health care proxy while they are competent to do so.

Even with the passage of the FHCDA, I still strongly encourage

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PREVENTING SWINE FLU – Assemblyman Schimminger recalls his reaction to his last flu shot during a special swine flu clinic he sponsored this past winter.



TALKING HEALTH – Assemblyman Schimminger chats with area resident Mary Lorich about the recently enacted Family Health Care Decisions Act, which enables a family member to make medical decisions when the patient is unable to voice his or her wishes. Schimminger noted that it's still important to fill out a Health Care Proxy form, which is available through his office by calling 873-2540.

RESPECTING FAMILY VALUES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

you to prepare a health care proxy, which allows an agent of your choosing to make any and all health care decisions on your behalf should you lose the capacity to do so yourself. The proxy form

can be tailored to give your agent as much or as little authority as desired. The designated agent must make decisions in your best interest and in accordance with your wishes. Health care proxy forms and instructions are available at my office, **3514 Delaware Ave., Kenmore, NY 14217, or by calling 873-2540.**

BE INFORMED, STAY ALERT

NY-ALERT, which was established in September 2007, allows individuals to register to receive notifications – via telephone, e-mail or text message – about a variety of topics, including severe weather, missing children, transportation delays or closures, and public health advisories. Now individuals can choose to be notified whenever a **Level 2 (moderate risk)** or **Level 3 (high risk)** sex offender listed on the public

Sex Offender Registry moves into or out of their designated community of concern. Individuals can register up to three areas, either by county/municipality, zip code or specific address, or any combination of those three options, for which they would like to receive sex offender relocation alerts. **Signing up for NY-ALERT is FREE. Your information is protected and confidential.**

To register, log onto www.nyalert.gov or call 1-888-697-6972, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.



EXPANDING CHILD LITERACY – The public library at Sheridan Parkside Community Center sat silent in the Town of Tonawanda for the past few years in the aftermath of Erie County's Red Budget/Green Budget fiscal meltdown. After months of negotiations, Literacy Empowerment Action Plan (LEAP) of Western New York, Inc. has taken occupancy and brought it back to life. Assemblyman Schimminger and Sheila Ginnane, president of Zonta Club of Kenmore, listened to opening remarks during the ribbon cutting ceremony of the LEAP of WNY Powerful Literacy Center and Children's Library within the town facility.

GRANTS AWARDED

Three local libraries are set to benefit from construction grants recently awarded by the state:

- **The City of Tonawanda Public Library - \$36,579**, to be used to replace sidewalks and to install a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) System.
- **The Kenilworth Branch Library on Montrose Avenue - \$83,622**, to replace the roof, install ceiling insulation, reconstruct the parking lot and driveway and install an RFID System.
- **The Kenmore Branch Library on Delaware Road - \$85,779**, to reconstruct the 7,600 square-foot parking lot and install an RFID System.

North Tonawanda and the City of Tonawanda have been selected to receive stimulus grants through the Clean Energy Projects in Small Municipalities program:

- **The City of North Tonawanda - \$271,000**, to implement traffic signal coordination at intersections along Meadow Drive and Nash Road. A portion of the funding will be used to install new signal controllers and inductance loops and program them based on a traffic study of the two corridors.
- **The City of Tonawanda - \$38,000**, to replace 348 lighting fixtures with a combination of 340 compact fluorescent light bulbs, T8 lamps with electronic ballasts, T5 fixtures, light-emitting diode (LED) exit signs, and LED wallpacks.

HONORING STATE CHAMPIONS –

The North Tonawanda Lumberjacks football team traveled to Albany in January to celebrate their New York State AA Championship win, a first for a Niagara County School. Assemblyman Schimminger presented a resolution on the Assembly floor commemorating the team's hard work and dedication during the 2009 football season.



GREEN JOBS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

With environmentally-friendly “green technology” finally coming of age, an expanded workforce will be needed to design, install, repair and operate the new equipment and related technologies. Over the past few years, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) has administered funds to support training programs to meet the new job demands. More than 10,000 workers have been retrained in “green job” skills across the state. Even so, projections indicate that the need for “green-trained” workers will more than triple in the next five years. To address this need, a green training infrastructure is being developed and is in various stages of implementation.

NYSERDA has already joined with 28 community colleges, including Erie Community College, and partnered with four International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

training facilities, one of which is in Niagara Falls, to provide photovoltaic (PV) training. These Clean Energy Training Programs have plans for expansion and will be offering additional training in solar water heating, and wind, geothermal and biomass fuel cells.

In addition, an important component of the Green Jobs/Green New York Program enacted into law last year requires that up to \$4 million be used to establish additional green job training for new technologies throughout the state. Working with the N.Y.S. Department of Labor, workforce development organizations, community-based organizations and labor groups, NYSERDA will build on current job training activities by developing advanced training and continuing education programs. Efforts will also be made to obtain certification and accreditation for these courses from the Institute for Sustainable Power, the Building Performance Institute, and the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners. Curriculum development, non-construction related jobs, apprenticeships and internships will also be addressed.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
www.nyserda.org**



BREAKING GROUND AT BUFFALO BOLT – The Assemblyman joined in breaking ground at the old Roblin Steel site in North Tonawanda where parcels will soon be shovel-ready for the new Buffalo Bolt Business Park. Robin secured \$1.2 million of state funding to construct the site’s access road.

FROM UNEMPLOYED TO NEW ENTREPRENEUR

New York State has extended, until December 7, 2011, the Self Employment Assistance Program, which I created to help individuals start a small business while collecting unemployment benefits. **Visit www.labor.state.ny.us, for more information.**

SEAP Candidates Must:

- ✓ Be entitled to Unemployment Insurance (U.I.) benefits.
- ✓ Be identified as having limited prospects of re-employment and likely to exhaust regular employment benefits
- ✓ Be at least 18 years of age
- ✓ Apply no later than the last day of the 13th week of U.I. benefits
- ✓ Be willing to work full-time in launching the business
- ✓ Be an active owner and not a silent partner
- ✓ Only participate in SEAP once



ATTENTION WOMEN VETS

For Too Long, women veterans have often been invisible assets to our Nation’s military services. Women not only served in World War II, Korea and Vietnam, but they took on additional responsibilities in Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. They have served both overseas and stateside. Whether it’s been in combat areas, on medical teams, as clerical staff, or in some other capacity, women veterans have served our country and they’ve done so proudly.

The Assembly has recently held hearings on the needs of women veterans. If you would like more information on these hearings or wish to submit comments on issues pertinent to women veterans, please email schimmr@assembly.state.ny.us or call 873-2540.



AGING GRACEFULLY – Members of the Cardinal O’Hara class of 1965 supported two of their former classmates, Assemblyman Schimminger and Diane Gilcrist Caruana, as the two performed in a special presentation of A.R. Gurney’s play “Love Letters” during a one-night-only joint benefit performance for their alma mater and the Niagara Regional Theatre Guild.