

**NASW-NYS Political Post**  
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**April Fools!** Legislators worked non-stop and around the clock to pass an on time budget and did so with no cuts to programs you care about...Um, April Fools ☺ Instead, the fiscal year came to a close on Wednesday (March 31<sup>st</sup>) with nothing more than budget extenders passed in the eleventh hour by each house. Though it looked promising, well ok, it looked as though there may be a shred of hope late Friday afternoon and early evening as the Assembly and Senate convened their first public joint conferences; however, any hopes of achieving agreement between the two sides, let alone crafting and passing an on time budget quickly dissipated when leaders from each house noted there was little to confer on given the two sides were not in agreement regarding revenue and spending targets. Adding to the difficulty is the Governor's stance on borrowing as he has reportedly noted there will be no discussion on borrowing until and unless additional cuts are made to the tune of \$1 billion. The Legislature is now on a scheduled Passover / Easter break and is not expected to return until April 7.

**April Showers** - Criticism is raining down on the Capital and it's coming from all directions. The Governor is pointing to legislative leaders and members alike for their inability to do an on time budget noting to several media sources that "the meetings on Saturday and Sunday announced by legislative leaders were to make the public feel as if there's more work being done than there really is." Senate Minority Leader Dean Skelos blamed Senate Democrats..."Rather than work around the clock to get a budget done on time, Democrats in the Senate and Assembly waved the white flag and simply gave up. By doing so, Democrats sent a clear message to taxpayers that they aren't willing to stay in Albany until the last moment to get a responsible budget done on time. Their failure to get a budget done on time, and worse, to not even try, is inexcusable." While Speaker Silver spoke in terms of process... "We can't just do it with a sledgehammer and hope that we don't hurt people in the process." Given all the rhetoric, one might assume a late budget is news here in Albany, oh contraire! As the Albany Times Union reports ..."since 1975 the budget has been completed on or before April 1 just half a dozen times. It was late every year between 1985 and 2004."

**May Flowers?** - In yet another miniseries like scandal brewing at the Capitol, Joan Flowers, legal counsel to former majority leader Malcolm Smith, was reportedly given a pink slip earlier this week. The Daily news reports that "She was involved in starting a Queens nonprofit called New Direction Local Development Corp. with Smith and Rep. Gregory Meeks in 2000. The group, to which Smith has directed \$56,000 in state funds, is now under investigation by the U.S. attorney's office for financial shenanigans."