

NASW-NYS Political Post
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Karin Moran, MSW

Face Off – After a series of contentious (public) meetings in Albany this week between legislative leaders, chatter turned to the likely prospect of a state government shutdown. As previously reported, the state has been subsisting on a series of one week budget extender bills since April 1. Last week’s bill however, was ill received when the Governor chocked it full of cuts to health care, \$775 million to be exact. Legislative backlash was quick though their hands were essentially tied given the fact that their choices consisted of passing the measure or shutting down the state. It was passed, but it was also coined the “blackmail bill” and added fuel to an already glowing fire between leaders and houses. As a result, Senators Espada and Diaz noted they would not vote for another extender bill, essentially giving the Republican minority the votes to halt passage of next week’s expected bill. The Governor, of course, did not take well to such threats and noted to the press that he would “not give into such thug activity.” The Governor later publicly ripped into Senate Minority Leader Dean Skelos for his hand in guiding the Senate Republicans to vote en mass against his extender bills. Skelos in turn, complained that he and his counterparts were consistently left out of the process...to which the Governor responded via the press... “I’m shocked, and I’m appalled, Senator Skelos has told us that he and the Republican senators are going to shut down the government, and they would shut down the government over something about meetings they haven’t been invited to and process issues.” Should next week’s extender not pass muster with either house, the social work O agency exemption would expire. Stay tuned folks.

Hat Trick, and then some – Senate Democrats passed a package of disability bills earlier in the week that range from housing protections to mandating insurance companies reimburse for wheelchairs in a timely manner. To view the entire package of disability bills you can simply log onto ... <http://blog.timesunion.com/capitol/archives/28049/disability-bills-passed/>

Icing – Getting out in front of an issue this week was Senator Craig Johnson as he proposed a property tax cap be included in next week’s budget extender bill. Senator Johnson noted... “For years, special interests have blocked the passage of a cap on school property taxes. While such legislation has twice passed the Senate and is supported by the Governor, it has never seen the light of day in the Assembly. As we have witnessed this week, Governor Paterson has the power to change that. I am calling on him to include the tax cap in next week’s budget extender legislation. Governor Paterson has a golden opportunity to secure a legacy as a friend of New York’s property taxpayers. He must show leadership, seize this moment and take this very important first step toward taming out-of-control property tax increases in this state.” The Governor has indicated openness to the idea and the measure, if included would certainly go a long way toward garnering support from Senate Republicans. Hmm...could result in a relatively quiet week, no? Yawn.

Roughing – For a pared down view of the leaders meetings log onto <http://blog.timesunion.com/capitol/archives/28051/icymi-the-leaders-meeting-condensed/> It is definitely worth the three minutes.