

NEWS



SUFFOLK COUNTY COMPTROLLER JOSEPH SAWICKI, JR.

For Immediate Release

Tuesday, April 7, 2009



COMPTROLLER RENEWS CALL FOR “STATE OF LONG ISLAND”

SAWICKI: “We can’t afford to wait any longer”

Citing the crippling effects to Long Island taxpayers of the massive new taxes and fees adopted in the recent New York State budget, Suffolk Comptroller Joseph Sawicki is renewing his call for Suffolk and Nassau to secede and become the 51st state.

“Long Island residents are disproportionately bearing the brunt of the most expensive state budget in history. We will suffer the largest personal income tax increase in state history; our STAR rebate checks are gone; we will have new LIPA utility taxes, a 5 cent tax on bottled water---and even a new salt water fishing fee” exclaimed Comptroller Sawicki. “All told, the New York State budget is spending 8.7% more with \$8 billion in new and increased taxes and fees – all in the midst of the worst economic times since the Great Depression. It will now be harder for Long Islanders to pay their taxes, keep their homes and make ends meet.”

“We educate 17% of the state’s students yet this Albany budget only gives Long Islanders 5% of the increase in education aid to our schools; any shortfalls will now have to be made up through local property taxes” continued the Comptroller.

The Comptroller will be asking the county executives and legislators of Suffolk and Nassau to give local support to bills introduced by Sen. Ken LaValle and Assemb. Fred Thiele (S.426--A and A.1189--A) “to establish a bi-county commission to study the feasibility of establishing the state of Long Island.”

Sawicki referenced last year’s Dowling College study confirming that – from 2002 thru 2006 – at least \$2.6 billion a year is given to Albany by Long Island taxpayers than we get back in state aid or services. “This new state budget balanced on the backs of Long Islanders will make these statistics much more glaring and worse – if you live and pay taxes on Long Island,” he said.

While acknowledging secession as “undoubtedly a steep uphill battle” Sawicki points out the benefits of statehood:

- 1) we would be the 19th largest state in the nation by population;
- 2) taxes raised on Long Island would be spent on Long Island;
- 3) we would have two US Senators representing us in Washington to look out for Long Island interests; and
- 4) it would give us the opportunity to restructure Long Island and “start anew” by consolidating the many local governments and taxing jurisdictions that now exist.

“We can’t afford to continue to be treated as Albany’s ATM; its time to pursue drastic measures if our region and economy are to survive. And statehood for us would mean political and financial independence from the New York City and Albany political leaders who dominate the New York State Legislature!”

**Contact: Suffolk County Comptroller’s Office (631-853-5040)
Joseph Sawicki, Jr., Comptroller**

-30-