



LEGISLATIVE BRIEFS

May 2011

Senate and Assembly Republicans, Business Community Step Up Pressure on Assembly Majority to Pass Property Tax Bill

The New York State Senate fight for a property tax cap has been stepped up and the National Federation of Independent Businesses and the New York State Association of Realtors have joined forces to promote the Governor's proposal.

However, recognizing the inherent danger of this cap measure, even the Senate has provided a caveat: "The Senate will be proposing and passing *extensive mandate relief measures which must go hand-in-hand with a property tax cap* to give school districts and local governments greater flexibility to spend tax dollars on local priorities, rather than to address state mandates". Go to: <http://www.nysenate.gov/press-release/senate-assembly-republicans-business-community-step-pressure-assembly-majority-pass-pr>.

Testimony of the Fiscal Policy Institute Regarding Property Tax Caps

The Fiscal Policy Institute works to increase public and governmental understanding of issues related to the fairness of New York's tax system and the stability and adequacy of state and local public services. Review the FPI's March testimony provided at the public hearing "Cap on Real Property Taxes" before the Assembly Standing Committees on Ways and Means, Education, Real Property Taxation, Local Government and Cities. "A cap on real property taxes would not effectively protect those most in need of property tax relief, and would exacerbate inequities in our current system of public school finance...": http://www.fiscalpolicy.org/FPI_Testimony_CapOnRealPropertyTax_20110301.pdf.

New York Shouldn't Look to Massachusetts as a Model for Property Tax Reform:

➤ <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=302>

NYS PTA Opposes Tax Caps! Be Prepared to *Take Action*; Check out our Positions/Rationale at:

➤ <http://www.nyspta.org/pdfs/advocacy/VLD%202011%20Issue%20Brief%20FINAL.pdf>

➤ <http://www.nyspta.org/advocacy/issesbriefstalkingpoints.cfm>

APPR Progress: Reform of Teacher/Principal Evaluation

Last year, legislation was enacted requiring an annual performance evaluation of all teachers and principals. These evaluations will play a significant role in a wide array of employment decisions, including promotion, retention, tenure determinations, termination and supplemental compensation, and will be a significant factor in teacher and principal professional development. At the Regents April meeting, the Task Force submitted a comprehensive report containing recommendations for implementing the evaluation system in New York. The draft recommendations were distributed for public comment. To view the draft, go to: <http://usny.nysed.gov/rtt/docs/100.2subpart30-2terms-draft-for-comment.pdf>.

Flavored Malt Beverages: A ‘binge in a can’!

High alcohol, flavored malt beverages are being purchased and consumed at an alarming rate by minors, according to some Albany legislators. To combat the growing popularity of the drink with underage drinkers, bills (S4221A Klein; A6914 Ortiz) have been introduced in the Legislature to make it harder for minors to get their hands on the drink. A public hearing was held on April 12 on the proliferation and marketing of these beverages referred to as “alcopops.” For information:

- <http://www.legislativegazette.com/Articles-c-2011-04-20-76643.113122-Flavored-malt-beverages-called-binge-in-a-can.html>
- <http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/bill/S4221A-2011>

What is an alcopop?

According to the Youth Development Survey (YDS) conducted by OASAS, it is estimated that statewide, over 900,000 underage youth consume alcohol each year and one out of every three 13 year-olds in New York State has tried alcohol. In 2007, underage drinking cost New York State \$3.5 billion due to work loss, medical care and other problems associated with the use of alcohol by youth. The Assembly Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse has scheduled a public hearing for Wednesday, May 25 in the Legislative Office Building in Albany to discuss the issues related to the prevention of underage alcohol consumption. For information or to provide input, go to:

<http://assembly.state.ny.us/comm/Alcohol/20110421>.

Legislation to Protect Children from Abuse

The New York State Senate passed a measure requiring camp directors to report suspected child abuse, regardless of the location where abuse may have occurred. The bill (S3777A), sponsored by Senator Jack Martins (R-C-I, Mineola), would protect children by requiring camp directors to report child abuse that may be taking place outside the camp setting. A companion bill (A5519) was sponsored by Assemblyman Englebright in February 2011. For information: <http://www.nysenate.gov/press-release/senate-passes-legislation-protect-children-abuse>.

FY 2011: Federal Funding Cuts for Education

President Obama signed the final appropriations bill for fiscal year 2011 on April 15, which will fund the remaining six months of the fiscal year. While the law does not impose the range of cuts to domestic programs that was debated earlier this year, it reduces funding across most federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Education, by more than \$38 billion.

K-12 education programs are subject to a 0.2 percent across-the-board cut that could total about \$836 million. However, some competitive grant programs, including Race to the Top, will see slight increases.

Read more details about specific programs at: <http://schoolboardnews.nsba.org/2011/04/nsba-analyzes-final-fiscal-year-2011-budget-and-program-cuts>.

Bipartisan TALENT Act Puts Spotlight on Gifted Students

A bill introduced in Congress would expand the focus of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act ([No Child Left Behind](#)) to put a spotlight on gifted students with needs of their own. The TALENT (To Aid Gifted and High-Ability Learners by Empowering the Nation’s Teachers) Act would require that state assessments capture when students perform above grade level and report learning growth for their most advanced students on state report cards. Learn more at: www.nagc.org.