



STATE OF NEW YORK | EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
DAVID A. PATERSON | GOVERNOR

**Transcript of Governor David A. Paterson's Remarks
"The Current Senate Stalemate and its Impact on all New Yorkers"
State Capitol, Albany, NY
July 8, 2009**

Good evening, my fellow New Yorkers, and thank you for this time.

One year ago I stood up in this State and declared a financial emergency. I realized that the downturn in our national economy would have a magnified effect because our state is so heavily reliant on revenues from Wall Street. Today I stand to face a government crisis, one that has compounded our fiscal woes that are plaguing this state.

For the last four weeks, we have witnessed a painful and too often embarrassing spectacle of paralysis that has become the New York state senate. Since this conflict began, I and 19 million other New Yorkers have been deeply chagrined that the senate cannot discharge its constitutional duties.

Now New Yorkers are starting to suffer.

Cities and counties are running up unanticipated deficits because the senate has failed to meet crucial deadlines.

At a time of fiscal recession, a crucial jobs program expired because the senate failed to renew it.

The mayor of New York City has initiated a hiring freeze of uniformed and emergency service workers, and the mayor of Yonkers told me himself that he cannot meet his payroll for one more week.

For the last month, I have negotiated and pressured the senate to compromise. I have met with dozens of senators individually and in groups. I have forced them into regular session every day, docked the payment of their expenses and today we have withheld their paychecks.

When I assumed the office of governor, I took an oath, and I swore to protect and defend the New York state constitution. The welfare of the people of this state, their security and safety, their economic stability must be my most important responsibilities.

So let's know this.

Number one, we do have a crisis and it goes a lot beyond the squabble in the senate. The real issue is the economy. Our revenue projections are down 36% in the last three months and if the legislature does not come back and pass serious cuts, the financial picture of the state is bleak.

Number two, the senate is paralyzed. There is no presiding officer of the New York state senate. There is no president tempore and two senators that lay claim to its highest post. There is no successor to governor.

If I became incapacitated, if something happened to me, it is not known who would act as governor and that would throw the entire state government into the chaos that is being experienced in the Senate now.

I have consulted with some of the State's foremost legal minds and a nationally recognized constitutional lawyer. The State constitution gives me the explicit power of appointment in cases of vacancies of office. There is nothing in the constitution nor in the law that says that I cannot fill the vacant post of lieutenant governor.

So, therefore, today, I will appoint a lieutenant governor who will serve out the remainder of my term with me.

I have selected Richard Ravitch, the former chair of the M.T.A. and the urban development corporation and a vital leader in the fiscal recovery in the 1970's to serve with me through 2010. He will not be a candidate thereafter.

Though I seek closure to this crisis, I am aware that I am not the final arbiter of legal issues, and should there be any legal action, I just ask that it be done expeditiously.

I came here tonight to seek your support for my unprecedented decision.

This, I believe, is the right thing to do. I have no doubt of that. This is the right thing for all New Yorkers.

We cannot allow for any further exposure to uncertainty at risk at a time of unparalleled fiscal difficulty.

The appointment of Richard Ravitch today will bring the governor a successor, the Senate a presiding officer, and will help to alleviate this crisis.

Thank you and God bless, and God bless the Great State of New York.