



NASSAU-SUFFOLK SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION, INC.

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March 15, 2007

TO: Long Island State Senate and Assembly Delegations

FROM: Susan Bergtraum, President  
Martin Kaye, Legislation Chairperson

RE: S.2986 Saland  
A.03682 Galef; Mltspnsr - McDonough, Thiele

New York now remains the only state that saddles school construction projects with the costly, time-wasting mandates of the Wicks Law. You have granted New York City and other city school districts exemptions from the Wicks Law. Don't Long Island school districts and taxpayers deserve the same?

The fiscal realities the State and its schools now face make it incumbent upon every elected official to assure that our limited revenues are not squandered.

S.2986 Saland/A.03682 Galef present you with an opportunity to once and for all unburden state and local taxpayers from the waste of an estimated 10-30 percent of construction costs due to the arcane Wicks Law. Analyses by PricewaterhouseCoopers, New York State School Boards Association and NYS Division of the Budget concluded that projects built under the Wicks Law cost significantly more and took longer to build than similar projects not subject to the Wicks requirements.

These bills would require the Education Commissioner to study all projects undertaken over the next four years using the single contract option to ensure that project quality and safety standards are protected. The Legislature would then have the benefit of actual experiences when it is called upon to renew or make permanent the law in 2013.

The time to act is now. On behalf of 108 Long Island school boards, we urge you to contact your leadership and request immediate action that would enable you to cast a vote that would benefit the taxpayers in your district and remove an impediment to the timely completion of school construction projects. Nothing short of outright repeal will be sufficient to bring to a halt decades of this misuse of public funds. Let this be the year that New York abolishes the Wicks Law.

cc: Governor Eliot Spitzer  
Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno  
Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver  
School Board Presidents and Superintendents  
Nassau and Suffolk Region PTAs