



Thursday
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Fallout continues over bailout

MID-HUDSON – Implementation of a payroll tax on all businesses in the 12 county MTA region is “misguide, unfair and a perfect example of New York driving business out of the state.” That assessment came Thursday from John D’Ambrosio, president of the Orange County Chamber of Commerce.



Spano makes a point at Westchester news conference

Within the New York City transportation region are the counties of Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Westchester and Rockland.

The State Legislature’s actions Wednesday night will add a payroll tax and increase fees on license plates, among other things.

The Albany votes were, for the most part, along party lines with Democrats, led by the New York City delegation, supporting the bailout, and Republicans from the northern counties and Long Island opposing it.

D’Ambrosio said the “Big Three” state leaders from New York City have now created “the great State of New York City and left the rest of the state hanging out to dry.”

Ann Meagher, president of the Greater Southern Dutchess Chamber of Commerce put the blame squarely on the state leaders. “This payroll tax is wrong in terms of public policy,” she said.

Meagher was also critical of a so-called reimbursement to public schools for their payment of the payroll tax. “You’ll have to pick me up off the floor if legislative leadership ever makes good on its promise to reimburse schools for their payroll contribution in the next budget cycle.”

Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce President Charles North expressed the same sentiments. He called the payroll tax “total nonsense and totally absurd.” North called for a forensic audit of the MTA to learn how area tax dollars are being spent.

A coalition of business, government, hospital and healthcare leaders in Westchester County Thursday said the payroll tax will “irreparably damage an already fragile state economy and business base.”

State Senators Jeffrey Klein, Suzi Oppenheimer and Andrea Stewart-Cousins voted for the tax package and the coalition called on them to break rank with the Democratic Party leadership “and take action to stop future punitive measures against the suburban business community.”

William Mooney, Jr., president of the Westchester Association, said the payroll tax is “the latest, and in many ways the most offensive, in what has become a very long line of anti-business actions taken by the State Legislature.”

County Executive Andrew Spano said the bailout allows the MTA to avoid making the structural changes needed to retool and reform its own operations