

Romaine, Zeldin and Graf Voice Strong Opposition to Proposed Reinstatement of NYC Commuter Tax

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Pictured at the LIRR Ronkonkoma station are Supervisor Ed Romaine, State Senator Lee Zeldin and Assemblyman Al Graf.

Farmingville, NY - On July 2, Supervisor Ed Romaine, New York State Senator Lee Zeldin (R,C,I Shirley) and Assemblyman Al Graf (R,C,I Holbrook) joined forces during a press conference at the Long Island Railroad's Ronkonkoma station to denounce proposals to revive the New York City Commuter Tax.

The tax would affect an estimated 265,000 Long Island commuters, with an impact of over \$100 million to the Long Island economy. In all, nearly 800,000 people paid commuter taxes to New York City in 1998 - the last year the tax was in effect. Of those, 265,938 were from Long Island. Suffolk tax filers who worked in New York City paid an average of \$288 in commuter taxes to the city.

"The idea of reinstating the commuter tax is very bad economics," said Senator Zeldin. "Instead of saddling hard working Long Islanders with the burden of additional taxes, those proposing a reinstatement of this ill advised tax need to focus on cutting costs and improving efficiency across the board. The cost of living in the New York City suburbs is high enough as it is. Any policy that knowingly makes it even more difficult to get by should be a non starter."

Assemblyman Al Graf said, "This is a fine example of others trying to use Long Island to subsidize the rest of the state. We can no longer afford it. We're broke so go away."

"A commuter tax is unfair and burdensome to Long Islanders who are already among the highest taxed residents in the state," said Supervisor Ed Romaine. "It's wrong for New York City to think that they can balance their budget on the backs of hard-working commuters who were just hit with a significant fare hike in March. I will do everything I can to fight against the passage of this ill-conceived bill."

"Our riders are already heavily burdened by taxes, stagnant or falling incomes, reduced service, and rising fares, which are scheduled to increase again in 2015. They cannot afford yet another tax for the privilege of traveling to and from work every day. Even without the commuter tax, many Long Island commuters are struggling to make ends meet," said LIRRCC Chair Mark Epstein. "Commuters and their employers already contribute greatly to the economy



and tax base of New York City and should be encouraged to operate and grow their firms, rather than discouraged from working in the City by yet another tax. We oppose a commuter tax that singles out the City's non-resident workers and is unaffordable for many of the commuters whom we represent."

The current New York City Mayoral candidates Christine Quinn, Anthony Weiner, Adolfo Carrion and Joseph Lhota have all spoken in favor of plans to reinstate this crippling tax on the Long Island economy.

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