



BARBARA LIFTON
Member of Assembly
125th District

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
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Economic Development
Job Creation, Commerce & Industry
Environmental Conservation
Higher Education
Mental Health

Legislative Commission on Rural Resources

December 22, 2004

Mr. Simon St. Laurent:
1259 Dryden Road
Ithaca, New York 14850

Dear Mr. St. Laurent:

Thank you for contacting me about the issue of empty-seat voting.

I am opposed to empty seat voting. The current Assembly rules prohibit empty-seat voting, stating that members must be within the bar of the Assembly chamber in order to have their vote recorded. I, personally, have always followed that rule, and am usually in my seat both during fast roll calls and slow roll call votes.

It has become apparent to me through the recent discussions that some members have abused this rule, leaving the chamber area to go to their offices in the adjoining building or even to leave the legislative complex entirely. In our recent caucus meetings on reform issues, I urged that this rule be strictly enforced, as it should be. As part of the Steering Committee's current overhaul of the rules, I expect that we will be adopting a new rule on this matter that will clarify and strengthen this current requirement.

Again, thank you for contacting me on this important issue. Please feel free to contact me again on this issue or any other matter of state concern.

Happy Holidays!

Sincerely,

Barbara Lifton
Barbara S. Lifton
Member of Assembly
125th District

BSL/scp