

Two leaders' meetings, little progress

November 23, 2009 at 7:48 pm by Irene Jay Liu

There were two leaders' meeting this afternoon — a three-way meeting between Gov. David Paterson, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and Senate Democratic Leader John Sampson at the governor's mansion, followed by a five-way leaders' meeting on the 2nd floor of the Capitol.

On his way into the governor's office, Silver ruled out the possibility of a two-way deal between the Assembly and the governor, or the Assembly and the Senate.

"There's no reason to talk about it," he said of a two-way deal. "It doesn't get us a law, we need a three-way deal."

When told that some of his members were "lobbying" for a two-way deal, Silver replied, "They're not lobbying me. They're not registered."

The Democratic leaders said little as they came in and out of the second meeting. Based on comments by Republican leaders, it appears that little progress has been made on coming to a deal.

On his way out of the meeting, Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb said that there is agreement on about roughly \$2.8- \$2.9 billion in deficit reduction actions, which coincides with what Senate Democrats have been saying all day.

"What have we accomplished. Uh. I believe the best way to say this is that we've had the same stumbling blocks today as we've had for the last couple weeks."

The sticking point remains with mid-year cuts to school aid, which Senate Republicans and Democrats both say is a non-starter.

When asked whether we'll be here for Thanksgiving, Kolb said, unequivocally, "No. I'm going to be with my family for Thanksgiving and I think everyone else will too."

When asked about the day after, or the day after that, Kolb said, "I have no idea. We have a saying upstate: one day at a time."

Senate Minority Leader Dean Skelos said the only progress that had been made was "probably after the fourth or fifth time of asking the governor, send us his bill, which none of us has seen — no bill number, no bill at all — that he's thinking about it."

When asked whether Paterson has a bill, Skelos said, somewhat confusingly, "He doesn't. He says he does, but he doesn't right now. I think he has a vague proposal. We've asked him to send

us a bill, with a bill number, and then we can make a decision as to whether we vote yes or whether we vote no.”

“So I guess the progress is that he’s thinking about it.”

Silver and Sampson emerged together. “We’re working,” said Sampson. “I think we’re working towards an end result. We’re going to continue to work through the night. We’re going to be in session tomorrow and get back to the governor tomorrow. Tell him where we’re at. That’s it. That’s all we have to report at this time.”

Not encouraging.