

## **Governor: 'There is no deal'**

\$3.2B deficit awaits return of lawmakers to Albany as Paterson says exodus will save taxpayers money

By **CASEY SEILER**, State editor

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ALBANY -- The work goes on, but the legislators are gone.

Members of the state Senate and Assembly left the Capitol on Thursday with plans to return on Monday -- if, that is, their leaders manage to hammer out a package to close the state's estimated \$3.2 billion budget deficit.

"We have them on call," Gov. David Paterson said following an afternoon leaders meeting. "There is no deal. I don't want to waste any taxpayers' money having them sit around."

Senate Democrats cancelled a planned Thursday afternoon session. Republicans reacted angrily to the exodus, and called on Paterson to immediately put his own package on the floor of both houses for debate.

"We're here to work, but we can't put a bill on the agenda," said Sen. John DeFrancisco, R-Syracuse, of the GOP's 30-member minority. "We're ready, able, provided cuts, provided leadership on this -- but without the votes we can't do a thing. And we certainly can't do a thing if ... the Democrat majority all goes home."

Assembly Republican Leader Brian Kolb held a brief news conference in which he called on Speaker Sheldon Silver and the leadership of the Senate to call legislators back to Albany to vote on a deficit reduction package. "We should not be going home," Kolb said.

Sen. Liz Krueger, D-Manhattan, spoke to the media to rebut the GOP's contention that Democrats were responsible for the failure to reach a final agreement.

Krueger said the day's developments were actually a good sign. "I actually really believe that Monday's the day," she said, "and that the governor agreeing to not call us back today and tomorrow was a recognition that we're getting this done as necessary."

Unrequited optimism, however, has remained in surplus at the Capitol all week as Paterson and legislative leaders have wrangled over a variety of politically perilous issues, especially cuts to education.

"That's not going to happen," Senate Conference Leader John Sampson said of midyear reductions for schools.

Krueger said the parties were now "worst-case" separated by cuts that added up to about \$150 million.

One idea that she said had received general support was a "spin-up" of almost \$400 million in stimulus funds earmarked for education -- essentially taking next year's funds and applying them to the current fiscal year. That action, of course, would leave a corresponding hole in the 2010-2011 budget.

Krueger also said it was likely Monday would bring news of the winning bid in the contest to build a racino facility at the Aqueduct race track. The company that secures that contract will provide the state with an immediate payment of \$200 million or more.