

Gov To Lawmakers: Get Ready To Stick Around Albany

By Celeste Katz

You may not be running for the Amtrak or the parking lot sometime soon, lawmakers.

Frustrated by the lack of progress in state budget talks, [Gov. Paterson](#) said today the time is coming where he will “sequester the panel” and keep lawmakers in Albany until an agreement is reached, the DN's Glenn Blain reports:

“What we are seeing is a panic befalling the Legislature because they recognize that there will be criticism for making these decisions and so the inaction is now preferred to the decision making and that is always a bad sign,” Paterson said during an afternoon interview on [WSYR radio](#) in Syracuse.

“It’s going to become my responsibility to shut this down and shut it down by pressuring my colleagues to stay in Albany until this gets done,” Paterson said about the [slow-going](#) budget negotiations.

The governor did not indicate how he would keep lawmakers in Albany. During last summer’s [Senate leadership coup](#), he called daily extraordinary sessions of the Senate that kept them in Albany until the crisis was resolved.

Paterson said he’s tried to be encouraging with legislators but that the time is coming to “tighten the screws” and force them to remain in the Capitol. He did not set a deadline for taking any action but noted that the state faces [severe cash flow issues](#) in June and must have a budget in place by then in order to conduct short term borrowing.

On the budget talks themselves, Paterson expressed particular frustration with the Senate’s insistence that [property tax rebates](#) be included in the 2010-2011 budget.

“We just don’t have the resources and I’m not going to borrow money to give people rebates on their property taxes,” Paterson said.

Property tax relief has emerged as a major sticking point in budget negotiations, with the Senate’s Democratic leadership insisting that the spending plan include provisions for [property tax relief](#).

The Senate's plan, according to Senate officials, would work akin to a circuit breaker, with middle-income residents receiving a rebate when their property tax bill reached a certain percentage of their income. The exact percentage is still being negotiated but it's estimated to cost as much as \$1.3 billion a year.

"Property tax relief represents 1% of the total budget," said Senate spokesman Austin Shafran. "Everyone in government should do their part to find a 1% solution to a problem that's costing New Yorkers their homes," said Senate spokesman Austin Shafran.