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**SMITH TO CO-CHAIR JOINT COMMITTEE ON CONSOLIDATION
Senator Looks Forward to a Vigorous Debate on Shared Services**

TRENTON - Senator Bob Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset, released the following statement today following the announcement that he will serve as Co-Chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee on Government Consolidation and Shared Services during this year's Special Session dedicated to solving New Jersey's property tax crisis.

"New Jerseyans have had to endure over 30 years of oppressively high property taxes, and the Legislature needs to take a stand now, before it gets worse.

"At the root of the property tax crisis is the duplication and inefficient delivery of services that characterizes the 'home rule' system of government that local officials cling to so zealously.

"We need to promote consolidation and shared services, to bring down the cost of government in New Jersey and ensure that property tax reform efforts are sustainable.

"I look forward to working with my colleagues on the committee in doing our part to find a solution to New Jersey's burdensome property taxes."