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SMITH - 'CORE' PLAN FITS IN WITH COMMITTEE PROPOSALS

Speaker's Property Tax Solutions a Vital Part of Real Results

TRENTON - Senator Bob Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset, the co-Chair of the Joint Legislative Committee on Government Consolidation and Shared Services, issued the following statement regarding today's hearing on Assembly Speaker Joseph J. Roberts' "CORE" reform package to encourage government consolidation:

"The Speaker's 'CORE' plan for property tax savings is an invaluable part of real, sustained reform, and fits in nicely with the proposals already talked about in this Committee, including Senator Kyrillos' municipal merger commission, and my effort to consolidate school administrative functions.

"As the people of New Jersey look for real results from the Special Session, we realize that voter-approved consolidation and voluntary consolidation cannot work separately, but together, will be a cornerstone in efforts to stabilize runaway property taxes.

"Also, tying State aid into efficiency benchmarks for government may be just the kind of approach needed to bring relief to beleaguered taxpayers.

"During this process, we have seen multiple proposals offered to bring about true property tax reform. But the reality is, without a multi-front plan incorporating the carrot and the stick models for prodding government consolidation and shared services, we are not going to see the sort of changes in our State's property tax system for which taxpayers in New Jersey are crying out."