

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE



Office of Legislator Robert Trotta

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Suffolk County Legislator Robert Trotta Takes Action To Help Small Businesses



Pictured at the press conference are from left to right: Ralph Mondrone of North Shore Antiques, Natalie Weinstein of Uniquely Natalie Consignment Shop, Suffolk County Legislator Robert Trotta and former Commissioner of the Suffolk County Department of Consumer Affairs Charlie Gardner.

(Smithtown, NY)... On December 16, Suffolk County Legislator Robert Trotta announced at a press conference held at Uniquely Natalie Consignment Shop in St. James, where he was joined by the owner Natalie Weinstein, Ralph Mondrone of North Shore Antiques, and former Consumer Affairs Commissioner Charlie Gardner, who also

chairs the Kings Park Chamber's Government Affairs Committee, that these are small businesses who are trying to make a living so with the county administration asking them to get a Home Furniture license puts a financial burden on them by requiring them to pay the county \$600 for the permit (\$200 for the application and \$400 for a two-year license) to sell a few pieces of furniture," said Legislator Trotta.

Suffolk County Legislator Robert Trotta was contacted by Mr. Mondrone and Ms. Weinstein, who have businesses in St. James, for help with a pressing issue when they each received a letter from the Suffolk County Department of Consumer Affairs advising them that since they sell home furnishings they must obtain a Suffolk County Home Furnishing License. They are required to have a license pursuant to Suffolk County Code, Chapter 563-106-A.

The letter states: "You've been identified by our office as engaging in the selling of Home Furnishings. It is unlawful for any person to engage in the selling of furniture or carpets without obtaining a license therefor from the office in accordance with and subject to the provisions of this article."

"This is no way to be communicating with our small business owners using words like "identified" or "unlawful" to intimidate the taxpayers in this county," said Legislator Robert Trotta.

To rectify this situation, Legislator Trotta will introduce legislation early next year which would clarify the definition of antique dealer and seller. "I believe that the original intent of the law was to protect consumers when primarily furniture and carpet retailers failed to deliver the merchandise as promised, but now it appears that the county administration is going after the small business person who sells a few pieces of furniture and takes the merchandise with him or her," said Legislator Trotta. Former Commissioner Gardner, who was in charge of the department when the legislation was enacted, agreed with Legislator Trotta that this was not the intent of the law and that these organizations were not the subject of complaints and also found the letter to be intimidating to the small business owner.