

Spin Cycle

Fiscal analyst calls NY deficit exaggerated

Saturday January 22, 2011 6:57 AM By Michael Amon



Frank Mauro, executive director of the liberal Fiscal Policy Institute in Albany, said talk of a \$9 to \$11 billion state budget gap was "exaggerated." His rationale: the number is based on an "unrealistic assumption" that general fund spending will increase a whopping 23 percent in 2011-12, which "is not going to happen."

"This somewhat exaggerated picture of the deficit is being used to justify actions that aren't really necessary," Mauro said.

"It's a difficult time to be governor but I don't think the situation is as dire as it's being presented," Mauro said. "I don't think it justifies some of the solutions being bandied about."

"The headline of a \$9 billion budget gap exaggerates things. It's based on this unrealistic 23 percent figure," Mauro said.

Erik Kriss, a spokesman for the state Division of Budget, said the 23 percent figure was based on spending growth written into law in the 2010-11 budget. "It assumes nothing is going to change," Kriss said. "But there are going to be all kinds of changes."