

Budget falling short of responsibilities

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ALBANY, N.Y. -- "It's wrong. It's disingenuous. It's not even truthful," said Tom Santulli, (R) Chemung County Executive.



County executives balk at the Governor's plan to shave two percent of state help off their local budgets.

"Be a big man, stand up, make the cuts you have to make. Don't be a coward and shift the costs to other to pick up," said Steve Levy, Suffolk County Executive.

Chemung County Executive Tom Santulli calls it 'shift and shaft.'

"They shift the cost of programs to local government, don't change the program, keep the program the same, mandate that we deliver it, but shift the cost to us. And then they shaft the taxpayer because the property taxpayer in local government is going to pay for this," said Santulli.

The county executives say the impact will be felt all over the state, including in the county that surrounds the State Capitol.

"When they walk away they leave us no choice but either raise property taxes or to cut programs," said Mike Breslin, (D) Albany County Executive.

What's worse, county executives say, is how the state's message is being portrayed.

"If there's programs that they are mandating that need to be cut, to reduce what it costs us to run government, we should be doing that. The state government should not be saying, do all of the things you've also done that we've mandated you do, but do them with less money. Because we're not gonna raise taxes, we want you to raise taxes," said Breslin.

"We could be looking at a 10 percent property tax increase in the 2009 budget," said Kathy Jimino, (R) Rensselaer County Executive.

As the budget clock winds down from days to hours, county leaders try to add things up.