



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Governor Cuomo Outlines Plan to Continue Building a New New York by Growing the Economy, Reinventing State Government, and Advancing New York as a Progressive Leader

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| ISSUE: **FAMILIES, GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, AGENCIES, BUDGET**

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today delivered his 2012 State of the State Address in which he outlined a comprehensive agenda that builds on the success of last year. The Governor launched a new economic development blueprint that invests billions of dollars in key public-private sector partnerships and rebuilding infrastructure to create thousands of new jobs across the state, proposed a reinvention of how government operates in order to get results for the people while protecting taxpayer dollars, and detailed a series of actions to strengthen New York's legacy as the progressive capital of the nation.

"New York State is on the way to coming back stronger than ever before. By working together in a bipartisan manner and putting the people first, we have established the credibility to govern and to lead. Now we must build on what we have already accomplished to begin to undo decades of decline. We have big problems, but we are confronting them with big solutions. Now is the time to get to work, building a New New York together," Governor Cuomo said.

SUMMARY OF THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS:

AN ECONOMIC BLUEPRINT FOR NEW YORK

- **New York Will Build the Largest Convention Center in the Nation:** To build on New York's strength as an international tourist destination, Governor Cuomo proposed a project to build the largest convention center in the country at the Aqueduct Race Track venue in New York City. The 3.8 million square foot convention center would accommodate the nation's largest events, drive demand for hotel rooms and restaurant meals, and create new tourism revenues. The project would be a \$4 billion private investment that is estimated to generate tens of thousands of jobs and create new economic activity throughout the state.

- **Master Plan for the Jacob Javits Site:** With plans for a new convention center in New York City, the Governor called for a master plan for the Jacob Javits site to create a mixed use facility and revitalize New York City's West Side with 18 acres of planned development. The plan would follow the successful Battery Park City model and involve more than \$2 billion in estimated private sector development funds to create a new 21st century neighborhood on the West Side.

- **\$1 Billion Economic Development Package for Buffalo:** Buffalo is the third poorest city in the nation with 28% of its residents living in poverty and chronically high unemployment. To combat this, the Governor announced that New York State will offer national and global industries up to \$1 billion in multi-year economic development incentives to come to Buffalo. By inviting large investments in growth industries- similar to those which made the Capital Region into a world-class center for nanotechnology innovation and the home of major semiconductor manufacturers- the Governor's plan for Buffalo is designed to create thousands of jobs and spur at least \$5 billion in new investment and economic activity.

- **A Second Round of Regional Economic Development Awards:** Building on the success of the Regional Economic Development Councils, Governor Cuomo announced that New York will keep the momentum going with a \$200 million second competitive round of regional economic development awards in 2012. The Councils have transformed the state's economic development approach from a top-down model to a bottom-up, community-based one. The

second round of awards will allow each region to continue creating its own economic destiny. In addition, the New York Open for Business campaign will step up its efforts to market New York to the world as a place to invest and will expand its promotion tourism by highlighting regional treasures like the Adirondacks, Catskills, wine country, and Long Island beaches.

- **A Comprehensive Approach to Casino Gaming:** Recognizing that New York is losing tax revenue, tourism dollars and jobs to neighboring states, Governor Cuomo announced that he will support a constitutional amendment to allow gaming in New York State. An estimated \$1 billion in economic activity could be generated from gaming in New York State.

- **The New York Works Fund and Task Force:** To help create private sector jobs and rebuild New York's infrastructure, Governor Cuomo announced the creation of the New York Works Fund and Task Force to coordinate and leverage capital investment- twenty private sector dollars to every public dollar- and put thousands of New Yorkers to work. The fund will support projects to improve or replace more than 100 bridges including the Tappan Zee, repair work to 2,000 miles of roadways, upgrades to 90 municipal water systems, improvements to 48 state parks and historic sites, and repair work to 114 flood control projects and dams.

- **An "Energy Highway" System to Power New York's Economic Growth:** To ensure a cost efficient and reliable supply of power is available to fuel the state's economic growth, the Governor announced a plan to build a private sector funded \$2 billion "Energy Highway" system that will tap into the generation capacity and renewable energy potential in Upstate and Western NY to bring low-cost power to meet the tremendous energy needs in Downstate New York. The plan also calls for the repowering of old and dirty plants to stop pollution in urban neighborhoods.

- **Invest in Solar While Protecting Ratepayers:** Noting that New York is a national leader in cost-effective, renewable energy production, Governor Cuomo announced that his

administration will launch the NY-Sun Initiative to expand solar energy production in the state while keeping costs under control to protect the ratepayer. NY-Sun will help increase competitive procurement of large, commercial-sized solar projects and expand rebate programs for residential and commercial small-to-medium systems. The program will strengthen the state's energy sector, and is designed to quadruple annual development of solar by 2013.

- **Expedite On-Bill Financing for Consumer Energy Efficiency Upgrades:** Governor Cuomo announced that On-Bill financing, a statewide program that allows consumers to retrofit their homes with energy efficient upgrades and pay for the cost on their monthly energy bill, will be offered to homeowners beginning in January 2012. On-Bill financing was scheduled to go live in June, but an agreement between the state and utilities expedited the start, allowing for new jobs to be produced immediately and benefits to be delivered to 40,000 homes across the state.

- **Master Plan for Energy Efficiency in State Facilities:** To promote energy efficiency, save taxpayer money, create jobs, and reduce pollution, Governor Cuomo announced that the State has developed a master plan for accelerating energy-saving improvements in state facilities. The plan is designed to save millions of dollars through new economical energy efficiency measures and would come at no cost to the state as the upfront investment would be repaid from the energy savings. The program will create thousands of high skilled jobs and reduce lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions by 8.1 million metric tons.

- **Farm-NY: Strengthening New York's Agriculture Sector:** Recognizing that agriculture contributes billions of dollars to New York's economy, Governor Cuomo announced a series of measures to support farmers and help the agricultural industry grow. To improve access to low interest loans that will assist farmers with infrastructure upgrades, the New York State Linked Deposit Program will be expanded to provide farmers in any part of the state with capital at affordable interest rates. Noting that 1.5 million New Yorkers live in areas

with limited supermarket access, the Governor called for expanding the successful FreshConnect farmers' market program to provide more residents with healthy, New York-grown food. In addition, the Governor called for the creation of large-scale distribution hubs strategically located across the state to improve promotion of produce grown by New York farmers.

A REIMAGINED GOVERNMENT

- Long Term Commitment to Fiscal Discipline: Recognizing that the State is more competitive when taxes are reduced, Governor Cuomo called for holding the line on spending this year and closing the remaining \$2 billion budget deficit with no new taxes or fees.

- Mandate Relief: Noting that by next year, pension costs for schools, state, and local governments will have increased more than 100% since 2009, Governor Cuomo called for reform to the pension system and the creation of a Tier VI retirement plan. The Governor announced that he will ask the joint Legislative and Executive Mandate Relief Council to hold public hearings and issue a package of recommendations to be voted on this legislative session.

Transforming Public Education: New York spends more money on education than any other state, yet places 38th in graduation rates. To reform the state's education system, Governor Cuomo announced that he will appoint a bipartisan education commission to work with the Legislature to recommend reforms in key areas including teacher accountability, student achievement, and management efficiency.

- Redesigning New York's Emergency Management System: The destructiveness of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee revealed limitations in the state's emergency response operations, including breakdowns in communications and transportation, as well as inadequacies in deployment of personnel. In an effort to build the best state emergency operation in the country and prepare New York for future emergency situations, Governor Cuomo called for a new statewide network of municipal and regional emergency responders.

The network will improve statewide communications and help ensure that resources can be deployed effectively in emergency situations.

A NEW YORK VISION FOR A PROGRESSIVE FUTURE

- Foreclosure Prevention Assistance: The financial crisis has taken a serious toll on homeowners across New York State, with many forced out of their homes and others facing foreclosure, Governor Cuomo announced that the Department of Financial Services will create a Foreclosure Relief Unit to provide counseling and mediation services to help New Yorkers stay in their homes.
- Creating a Tenant Protection Unit: To better protect tenants and ensure the tough rent regulations enacted in 2011 are properly enforced, Governor Cuomo announced that New York State Homes and Community Renewal will create a Tenant Protection Unit to investigate fraud and prosecute landlords who fail to maintain essential services.
- A Continued Commitment to Minority and Women-Owned Businesses: To build on last year's efforts to expand economic opportunities for minority and women owned business enterprises (MWBES), Governor Cuomo announced new measures to continue support for MWBEs. With credit access difficulties hindering the competitiveness of many MWBEs, New York will extend credit to give MWBE contractors the backing they need to succeed. The program will support at least \$200 million in contracting for MWBE firms.
- Additional SUNY Challenge Grants: For years, SUNY has been the great equalizer for the middle class by allowing New Yorkers from working families to gain a quality education. To build on last year's efforts to rebuild SUNY through bringing together academic excellence and economic development, the Governor announced that program to allow SUNY's 60 campuses to compete for three \$20 million challenge grants. The grants will continue the Governor's work to build SUNY institutions into leading centers of excellence, innovation, and job creation.
- No Child Should Go to Bed Hungry in New York: With 1 in 6 children in New York State living in homes without enough food on the table, Governor Cuomo declared that no child

should go hungry in New York State and his administration will do all it can to prevent it. Thirty percent of New Yorkers who are eligible for food stamps do not receive them, leaving over \$2 billion in federal funds unclaimed every year. To help these New Yorkers, the Governor announced that his administration will seek to increase participation in food stamp programs by reducing barriers including fingerprinting for working families, and work to eliminate the stigma associated with the hunger assistance programs.

- Create an All-Crimes DNA Database: To better protect New Yorkers and improve the state's criminal justice system, Governor Cuomo announced that he will propose legislation to create a databank to obtain DNA from all convicted criminal defendants that are found guilty of any felony or Penal Law misdemeanor. Currently, DNA is only collected from those convicted of less than half the crimes on the books in New York. The DNA databank as it currently exists has provided leads in over 2,700 convictions and led to 27 exonerations of the wrongfully accused. Under the legislation the Governor will propose, DNA will be key to exonerating the innocent, convicting the guilty, and protecting New Yorkers in a fair and cost-effective way.

- Establish a Tax Reform and Fairness Commission: Continuing efforts that began at the end of 2011 to reform the state tax code to boost job creation and improve fairness, Governor Cuomo announced the creation of the Tax Reform and Fairness Commission to propose additional, long-term changes to corporate, sales, and personal income tax systems, and to find ways to close tax loopholes, promote efficiency in administration, improve New York's business climate, and enhance collection as well as enforcement.

- Implement Campaign Finance Reform: Governor Cuomo called for comprehensive reform of the state's campaign finance system to make sure that all New Yorkers have an equal voice in the political process. New York ranks 48th in the nation in voter turnout and a smaller percentage of New York residents contribute to candidates to state office than anywhere else in the nation. The Governor called for a better campaign finance system that

system that includes matched contributions and lower contribution limits, and increase enforcement at the Board of Elections.

- Create an Office for New Americans: To ensure that New York remains a land of opportunity for all, Governor Cuomo announced that his administration will create an Office of New Americans to assist legal permanent residents who come to New York State. The office will provide a variety of services, including helping those with high-skills training and experience obtain the licenses and credentials they need to earn their way; helping those with limited formal education receive access to adult education and job training; and helping new legal permanent residents navigate the path to citizenship. It will also encourage entrepreneurship and take steps to protect new Americans as they transition to full participation in New York's communities.

- Train Leaders for a New New York: To help address the state's human capital crisis, Governor Cuomo announced that his administration will launch the New New York Leaders Initiative to create opportunities for the state's next generation to dedicate their careers to public service. The first component of the initiative, the Student Intern Program, will assign students to a particular branch of government to provide hands-on experience for interns to interact with government leaders and policy makers. The second component, the Empire State Fellows Program, will be a full-time leadership training program that will prepare the next generation of talented professionals who are members of underrepresented groups for careers as state policy makers. The New NY Leaders Initiative is designed to renew the connection between young people and the state and ensure that state government is diverse, talented, and prepared to lead the way for decades to come.

- Protect Reproductive Rights: To continue to vigorously protect a woman's right to choose, Governor Cuomo pledged to fight for passage of the Reproductive Health Act. The Act protects the fundamental right of reproductive freedom and ensures that the rights of individuals to make difficult and personal health care decisions are preserved.

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