



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

LOOKING FOR MORE PROGRESS IN A NEW YEAR

PATTY RITCHIE January 6, 2012



When Governor Andrew Cuomo delivered his State of the State message this week, it was clear to me that he recognizes that we have a lot more work to do to get our Empire State back on track to create more jobs for New Yorkers.

That's why I'm looking forward to working with him to find new and creative ways to get our economy moving and get more of our neighbors back to work.

In addition to agreement on cutting taxes and red tape, and holding the line on new spending, the Governor outlines some achievable goals, if we can keep partisan politics to the side, much as we did last year—with impressive results.

One of those was the adoption of an on-time, balanced budget that eliminated a \$10 billion deficit without new taxes or borrowing. The tax cap, lower spending, and the new, Middle Class Tax Cut were just a few more.

We need to keep that momentum going, and some of the Governor's ideas were right on the mark, like his plan to find new ways to streamline government. I'm already hard at work doing just that.

Last month, the bipartisan Mandate Relief Working Group I organized with leaders from across Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties developed an initial list of outdated and unnecessary regulations and

excessive mandates that can be modified or repealed to provide taxpayer relief.

Mandate relief is at the top of the agenda again this year, as is the need to ensure that our rural schools aren't shortchanged by complicated education aid formulas that don't always work well for our communities.

The Governor was right to focus on meeting our energy needs with upgrades to our aging electric transmission system. These critical improvements will allow us to move power more efficiently throughout the state, while helping to generate jobs closer to home in Central and Northern New York. (It also could be a boost to efforts to bring a fourth nuclear plant to Oswego County.)

The popularity of TV shows like CSI and Law & Order have introduced a generation of viewers to the wonders of DNA, and its value in helping to solve crimes and catch criminals. Yet in New York, our efforts to collect DNA samples from convicts has lagged technology in recent years.

I agree with the Governor that we need to give law enforcement modern tools to help solve crimes, like expanding the DNA database to include people convicted of all felonies and misdemeanors.

Speaking of technology, the Governor's idea for a single digital portal to help citizens and businesses get information and assistance from their government should also help make the Empire State more "user friendly."

In 12 months, we began to turn New York to a new course. Over the next year, we have to make sure that we continue that progress, and keep our state moving toward a better future.