



## Changing New York Agenda

### *Changing the Way New York Educates*

#### **Creating Schools for All Students**

- **Accelerate the Phase-in of Foundation Aid** - In response to a ruling by State Court of Appeals that New York State had underfunded its primary school system by billions of dollars, the Foundation Aid formula was created in FY 2007-08, however its funding was interrupted by the 2007-09 recession. The IDC proposes making a \$1.47 billion investment directly to the Foundation Aid formula, for the first year of a multi-year commitment to achieve complete funding.
- **Supporting Community Learning Schools** - More than a school, these campuses offer social services, medical and dental care, innovative clubs for students and classes for parents and enriching academic programs, making them central to community life. The IDC seeks \$50 million in a new Community Schools grant for four years to establish 400 more Community Learning Schools. This will serve an additional 200,000 children by 2020. The IDC also asks for \$5 million to fund existing Community Learning Schools.
- **Expanding Afterschool Programs** - Over 1 million students in New York State would attend an afterschool program if a slot were available, keeping children and adolescents in a safe environment to grow academically and stay off the streets. The IDC proposes expanding funding by \$10.5 million a year to a total \$32.8 million, allowing the Advantage Afterschool Program to serve 20,000 children again. The IDC also proposes spending \$10 million additionally to fund more STEM-oriented after school programs.
- **Increasing the number of dual language programs** - Many students grow up in bilingual environments, but while in school lose the ability to become proficient in both English and their native tongue. Dual language schools help students prepare for the global economy by studying in two languages. In April 2016, New York City created 29 such programs and nine transitional bilingual education programs. The IDC seeks to expand dual language education in the state with a \$5 million investment, serving over 6,000 students.
- **Expanding mental health services in schools** - Mental health services in schools help children who need services gain better outcomes academically. The IDC wants \$5 million for the

expansion of mental health services to meet the needs of 16,500 students across 60 districts. The IDC also supports exploring legislation adding mental health training as part of a teacher's continuing education requirements.

- **Pre-K Consolidation** - Currently, seven pre-K programs with different curriculums operate across New York State, causing confusion for young students as they enter kindergarten and their teachers. The IDC proposes a consolidation of the seven programs to two: one for full-day instruction and one-for half-day to ensure curriculum continuity and help teachers in the field.

## Standing up for Students

- **College Affordability for All** - With ever-rising college tuition costs, increasing Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) awards will help all students who reside in New York obtain a degree. By raising the income eligibility cap from \$80,000 to \$200,000 a thousands more students will benefit from state aid. TAP awards would also become available to any resident, regardless of immigration status.
- **New York Achieve** - College grads in New York State are strapped with an average \$26,000 debt. The IDC envisions the creation of the New York Achieve Loan Program, a zero-interest loan fund created with \$50 million, to keep college affordable and insight for the future of our state. Loans would be granted to first-time undergraduate students who finish in the top five percent of their high school class with a 3.5 GPA or higher or score a combined 1200 or more on the SAT or a composite score of 27 or higher on the ACT. Students could apply for the loans after accepting all federal, state and grant aid and could use up to \$5,000 a year on a private or public, four-year institution.

Students who are engineers and teachers in STEM Education will have the ability for loan forgiveness, if they work in New York State. Engineers who remain employed in the state for the first five years after graduation would receive 50 percent of their loans forgiven. STEM-certified teachers who spend five years working in New York State would have 100 percent of their loans forgiven.

Smaller zero-interest loans would be made available for students interested in trade, technical or vocational studies. Students could use up to \$3,000 a year for two years.

- **Finishing Community College in 2 years** - Currently, only 20% of community college students graduate within three years of starting. The IDC proposes expanding CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Program to all CUNY schools and SUNY community colleges. Students enrolled in these programs complete their associate's degrees within 3 years at a rate 40% greater than non-ASAP students. Studies project an economic return of up to \$410 million in additional state and municipal taxes paid on a \$117 million investment.
- **Create a New York State Pre-paid Tuition Plan** - Tuition Costs are rising each year and faster than inflation Tuitions at both private and public colleges and universities grew an average of 4% between the 2011-2012 academic year and the 2012-2013 academic year. Average tuition at a Private four-year university in 2012-13 is \$29,056 and at a public four-year university is \$8,655. The IDC proposes implementing a pre-paid tuition plan that would allow parents to lock in current tuition rates at New York State public and participating private and independent institutions for their children.

## *Changing the Way New York Works*

- **Work & Save** - An AARP study discovered that 3.6 million New Yorkers do not have access to an employer-sponsored retirement plan, pension or 401K. The senior advocacy group also found that the average American had only saved \$3,000 in the bank. To help workers put money away for retirement, the IDC supports passage of Senator Diane Savino's bill, S.6045-D, to create the New York Secure Choice Retirement Program, a state-sponsored IRA program. The fund would automatically enroll employees at businesses with 25 employees or more that do not offer a retirement plan. Replicating a model in Illinois, it would be run by a board at a cost of \$15 million. The IDC estimates between 1.4 and 2.5 million New Yorkers would benefit through its creation.
- **No Worker Left Behind**- While home health aides care for our most vulnerable citizens they earn a meager \$10.75 an hour and personal care aides make just a little more at \$11.73 a hour. Subpar wages in this fast-growing industry have led to a high-turnover for health care workers, making it hard for consumers to build enduring relationships with their aides. Half the human service workers, like social workers or child care workers, earn less than \$15 per hour, even though two thirds require college degrees to work. These workers often use their personal vehicles to commute long distances to meet their clients, without reimbursement. While New York State raised the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, it is still an inadequate rate for caregivers. The IDC proposes raising their wages incrementally over six years so their earnings reach above the statewide minimum wage. These workers are paid through Medicaid and it would cost the state \$45 million in the first year and by its final implementation \$270 million a year. The IDC also proposes making workers hired through the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program eligible under the Wage Parity Law so they will be paid at the same rate as other home care workers.

Workers in the car wash industry receive tips differently than in other industries such as restaurants. Because tracking worker hours and tips is difficult and time consuming, workers are subject to wage theft by employers who fail to make up the difference between their wages and tips. Senator Hamilton's proposal, S.2541, would make car wash workers eligible for the full minimum wage, without the tip credit.

- **Cut New York City Income Taxes for Low Wage Workers** - The IDC proposes slashing New York City income taxes for low wage workers, those who earn under \$50,000 annually, to 0%. The tax cut would benefit 2.2 million New York City residents, providing an average \$1,000 in relief.
- **MOVE ACT** - Many low-wage workers are forced to sign non-compete agreements, leaving them with few options for upward mobility. The IDC proposes banning such non-compete agreements for low-wage workers by passing the Mobility and Opportunities for Vulnerable Employees Act, sponsored by Senator Diane Savino. Employers using non-compete agreements for workers who don't fall into a "low-wage" category would also have to disclose such an agreement at the beginning of the hiring process.
- **Made by New Yorkers** - Manufacturers must stay in the state, but one reason they close up shop, taking away good-paying jobs, is burdensome property taxes. Currently these firms receive a 20% property tax rebate, which should be increased to 100% to incentivize manufacturers staying here. The IDC also seeks to provide grants for smaller businesses looking to expand in the state

and create a new, knowledge exchange program to help businesses connect with experts in the state to advance their ventures. The IDC will push for Buy American provisions for state contracts, including by working to create the Made in America Rating System (MARS) to protect American workers from unfair competition.. The IDC also envisions a “Made By New Yorkers” label for products created in the state, with New York State products using the “Made in the USA” standard.

### *Changing the Way New York Houses*

- **Recreating the Mitchell Lama program** - The Mitchell Lama program is one of the greatest affordable housing programs ever created. It houses mixed-income residents under one roof, and provides an important affordable housing option to middle-class families who are being priced out of New York. The IDC has sought to revive the spirit of Mitchell Lama by providing significant funding for middle-income housing for the first time in decades. Last year, the IDC successfully secured \$50 million: \$25 million to rehabilitate existing Mitchell Lama buildings and \$25 million for the Middle Income Housing Program, which serves families with incomes up to 130 percent of the AMI. Over the next four years, the IDC would like to see a \$150 million investment in the Middle Income Housing Program to construct new, affordable housing for working families.

The IDC also proposes a Middle Income Housing Tax Credit, a 4 percent refundable tax credit, to spur the creation of units for families making up to 130 percent of the AMI.

- **Revitalize Our Communities** - Homeownership is out of reach for many across the state. A 2015 study found that this was particularly true in minority communities in New York City where only 16% of Hispanic families and 26.5% of African American families own their homes. The IDC proposes establishing more Community Land Trusts and Land Banks throughout New York State to put homeownership and affordable rentals in reach for those frozen out of the market. Land trusts and banks are non-profits comprised of community members and businesses that buy land to convert to affordable housing. The IDC would like to provide technical and financial assistance for new land trusts and banks with \$3 million. Some of the properties these non-profits look to acquire are often old and require lead testing and abatement, which could be too financially cumbersome for a potential homeowner. To remove that barrier, the IDC proposes \$1 million in funding to allow land banks to perform testing in-house, and additional \$2 million to assist municipalities with grant management and expedited lab testing.
- **NYCHA 2020 Plan** - The IDC’s NYCHA 2020 plan calls for the creation of the Public Housing Revitalization Fund to provide state grants for critical repairs for NYCHA developments. Building on last year’s \$100 million commitment from the state, the IDC calls for another \$100 million in state funding for NYCHA.

Senator Jeff Klein will introduce legislation calling for a NYCHA Monitor, responsible for ensuring that capital spending is used effectively and empowered to intervene if projects are mismanaged. Additionally, the IDC proposes that NYCHA submit information about building conditions to the New York City Council to increase transparency.

To fast-track repairs, the IDC wants to implement the Certificate Repair Program, which would give private developers greater rights in up-zoned areas in exchange for expedited repairs in public housing.

The IDC is also pushing to make vulnerable populations, like veterans and domestic violence victims, priority applicants, to ensure those most in need are able to access the help they deserve.

Lastly, mold plagues NYCHA developments. The staff dealing with mold remediation, however, is not required to be licensed. The IDC proposes mandating mold remediation training for NYCHA staff dealing with mold issues.

- **Keeping Condos and Co-ops Affordable** - The tax system in New York City places owners of condo-coop owners in Class 2, treating these properties as rentals even though they are not. The IDC supports Senator Avella's bill, S.893-B, which proposes the creation of a new class one-a for condo-coop owners so they are not faced with unfairly high tax bills. Under this proposal class one-a properties will be covered by the current property tax caps that exist for class 1 properties. The IDC also proposes reforms to the Housing Development Fund Corporation to ensure maintained affordability in the future. These reforms include limiting resale prices, providing new subsidies to ensure continued viability, and adding new reporting requirements for resales of HDFC units.
- **Extending the Property Tax Cap to Include New York City** - New York City's complex and burdensome property tax system continues to increase for many residents, with the average increase last year at six percent. Increasing property values are driving up assessment values across the boroughs, while large Class 2 properties are disproportionately affected due to a lack of any cap on their assessed values. The IDC would extend the statewide two percent property tax cap to cover New York City, in order to provide property tax payers relief from sharp increases based on rising assessed values.
- **Combatting Homelessness** - The homelessness crisis in New York City, in particular, cannot be solved by spending taxpayer dollars to place homeless families and individuals in temporary hotels and motels. The expensive, unstable and sometimes unsafe settings do nothing to solve the crisis. The IDC supports the creation of the Home Stability Support program to subsidize housing for homeless families and individuals, those on the brink of homelessness and families facing domestic violence or hazardous conditions. The program would save taxpayers money, while creating stability for families and individuals by giving them a place to call home.

### *Changing the Way New York Provides*

- **Increasing funding for child care programs** - The recently authorized federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Act contains new health, safety and quality requirements which will increase the safety and quality of New York's child care for working families and their children, but there is a cost. With the belief that a strengthened investment in child care will provide critical family support to underserved parents in New York, the IDC proposes increasing Child Care and Development Block Grant funding by \$90 million to cover the costs of new federal regulations, providing \$100 million in additional subsidy funding to reach 13,000 more children and expanding the Facilitated Enrollment program to \$25 million.
- **Providing Quality child care** - While advocating for child care and day care services, it is important for providers to adhere to top notch standards. Quality Stars NY, a project of the Early Childhood Advisory Council, helps facilities adhere to the highest education standards. The group provides professional guidance, technical assistance, collects and monitors workforce data, and helps providers maintain the best practices moving forward. Last year, they received \$5 million to fulfill this mission and with \$20 million more, New York can serve hundreds more programs with

this crucial service. In addition, the IDC urges passing of the Governor's Child Care Program Bill to provide New York's child care regulatory agencies with the tools they need to properly address issues of health and safety compliance.

- **Pass Governor Cuomo's Child Care Program bill** - Last year, the IDC joined Governor Cuomo in introducing a comprehensive program bill to enact reforms to protect children in day care. Parents would be notified in writing of suspensions, a unified searchable statewide database of providers and violation histories would be created, licenses would be denied to chronic offenders, among other stricter regulations. While the Senate passed the bill, the Assembly did not. The IDC will work with the Governor and the Assembly to enact reforms to protect children and keep parents informed.
- **Incentivizing businesses to provide child care** - With New York's cost of child care now the highest in the nation working families are struggling to find affordable solutions. The IDC proposes tax incentives to businesses to provide child care to their employees, resulting in free or affordable child care for working families. Employer-sponsored child care provides benefits for employers and employees, such as decreasing the likelihood of parents leaving their job to take care of their children. The total cost to the state is estimated to be \$40 million, either as an added expense or as a share of current spending.
- **Helping parents who work the night shift** - Currently, parents who work night shifts aren't eligible for affordable child care subsidies in all social services districts. For many parents who work night shifts there is a need for day time child care so they can sleep. Senator Savino's bill, S.5184-A, would remedy this problem by requiring social services districts to make the subsidy available to these parents. This measure is expected to be revenue neutral, as it will merely make child care slots available to night shift parents.
- **Expanding the Child and Dependant Care Tax Credit** - The cost of childcare is steep. On average childcare costs \$9,500 per child annually in New York State, but the State Child and Dependant Care Tax Credit has not been raised since 1999. On average, a New York City taxpayer claims up to \$547 in this credit and the statewide average is \$390. The IDC believes that families need relief and the credit should be expanded by 50% to cover the rising costs of childcare.
- **Protecting New Yorkers from high utility costs** - New Yorkers pay exorbitant utility rates, but have no voice in the rate-setting process, unlike consumers in 40 other states that have a Utility Consumer Advocate. The IDC is calling for the appointment of a Utility Consumer Advocate who would operate independently and provide a meaningful voice for consumers. In Connecticut, its advocate saved consumers \$730 million in FY 2012. With an \$8 million annual funding stream, this office could save New York's ratepayers up to around \$784 million.
- **Reverse Mortgage Reform** - Reverse mortgages can often be a powerful financial tool for seniors, however unscrupulous actors can cause seniors to misunderstand these products, resulting in them being taken advantage of. The IDC proposes comprehensively regulating reverse mortgages and their associated marketing to make these products beneficial to seniors, while protecting them from exploitation and abuse. Senator Klein introduced S.8177 to extend consumer protections for regular mortgage foreclosures to reverse mortgage borrowers as one measure of the proposed reforms.
- **Enhancing the Senior Citizen Homeowners' Exemption (SCHE) and Disabled Homeowners' Exemption (DHE)** - The SCHE/DHE programs help senior and disabled residents

remain in their homes through exemptions on property taxes. However, the qualifying income limits remain astoundingly low. While income thresholds for similar programs, such as SCRIE/DRIE, were increased by the IDC to help more seniors and disabled tenants, the SCHE/DHE benefit remains at a combined income limit of just \$29,000, with a “sliding scale” option for those making over \$29,000, but less than \$37,400. In order to restore parity between these programs, and reflect the rising cost of living in New York, the IDC would enhance SCHE/DHE by increasing the income limit to \$50,000, with the “sliding scale” ceiling being \$58,400 for lesser tax relief.

- **Health Care Coordination Funding** - Health care costs in New York are especially high for seniors who have trouble adhering to their complicated care plans. Modeled after successful private programs that help seniors who continually miss doctors appointments, live alone, have low health literacy and have difficulty following treatment plans, the IDC proposes at least \$300,000 in funding to support health care coordination programs in New York State. Investment in health care coordination is demonstrated to produce over a 5-1 return on investment in health care dollars saved.

### *Changing the Way New York Protects*

- **Raise the Age** - The stain of a criminal record prevents 16- and 17-year-olds treated as adults from leading productive lives. New York trails behind 48 states that treat teens as juveniles. The IDC will be working with stakeholders to craft legislation to finally raise the age in New York.
- **Increasing civil defense funding for housing court litigants** - Many tenants who find themselves in housing court are unaware of their rights and lack access to sufficient legal counsel. The IDC will work with legal groups throughout the State to identify the necessary amounts.
- **Protecting Immigrant Communities** - Immigrants are the fabric of New York State. Nearly two-thirds of defendants in the US immigration court system face a judge without legal help because immigrants have no right to counsel. Last year, the IDC secured \$250,000 in funding for the Vera Institute of Justice for services and expenses related to assisting detained immigrants facing deportation. The IDC proposes increasing funding to \$11.1 million to ensure that all immigrants, regardless of status, have access to legal representation. The \$11.1 million in funding represents an increase to New York City of \$870,000 and state funding by \$3.35 million. By funding legal services for those facing deportation we can ensure that immigrants are afforded due process and equal treatment while eliminating disparities and enhancing the integrity of our current justice system.
- **Expanding Specialty and Homeless Courts** - Specialty courts, also known as problem solving courts are expected to reduce recidivism and increase public safety by being aimed to aid certain individual needs of certain populations and to centralize similar cases and services. The IDC recommends expanding the use of specialty courts by allowing cases meeting specific criteria to be removed from town or village court to one of these specialty courts. The IDC also supports the establishment of homeless courts to resolve misdemeanor offenses, non-violent felonies, and outstanding warrants for homeless individuals while helping them seek housing, job training employment and educational opportunities, in addition to drug or alcohol addiction programs and mental health treatment. In addition, the IDC supports Senator Carlucci’s S.6595 to make it easier

for cases in local criminal court to be removed to problem solving courts such as veterans' courts, drug courts, mental health courts, and in the future, homeless courts.

### *Changing the Way New York Lives*

- **Protecting New York's water** - The crises in Hoosick Falls and Newburgh, as well as those nationwide, have brought to light serious concerns with New York's water systems. The IDC proposes the creation of a \$10 million strategic water safety fund to drive a study and long term plan to ensure a safe water supply for all New Yorkers. These investments include identifying technologies to improve monitoring of public water supplies, identifying new revenue streams to invest in statewide water handling infrastructure and other recommendations to prevent further crises.
- **Enhancing water testing in New York's small communities** - Small communities in New York often struggle to find the funds to test their small water systems for unregulated contaminants. The IDC will introduce legislation that would adopt the EPA's list of unregulated contaminants into state law, giving small communities the resources to test their water supplies for these dangerous substances.
- **Increase funding for NYSERDA Microgrid Pilot Program** - NYSERDA has recently begun stage three of its statewide microgrid program to combat the age of the current electrical grid. Microgrids lower the capacity demand on the current system and will result in long term drop in energy costs respective to the fluctuating cost on the market. The IDC proposes matching the current stage 3 funding to a total of \$25 million.
- **Expanding Access to Fresh, Affordable Food** - All five of New York City's boroughs have areas known as food deserts, where fresh affordable, produce is difficult to find. This lack of availability has contributed to an increase in illnesses such as obesity and diabetes in these areas. New Yorkers statewide that get help with food pantries also face difficulties getting access to fresh food. The IDC proposes an increase in access to fresh food through partnerships with farmers markets and food pantries and decreasing supermarket food waste as well. The IDC also supports educational programs about the importance of healthy eating at a cost of \$1.5 million.