



Testimony on the FY 2026 Executive Budget Proposal Workforce Development/Labor

The Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) proudly represents employees that work for the state, local governments, school districts, public authorities, the private sector, and home-based childcare providers. These frontline employees allow New Yorkers to get to work and school every day. They keep our roads clear of snow, care for our children, ensure our loved ones in a hospital or nursing home get the care they need, and work every day to give individuals with a developmental disability or mental illness the quality of life that they deserve.

As the Legislature considers the FY 2026 budget, it is essential to prioritize investments that support the workers who provide these services. This means making meaningful investments in infrastructure, healthcare, childcare and education. Improving workplace safety, recruitment and retention, and providing fair wages and benefits must also be a priority. A budget that prioritizes these needs is a budget that invests in the long-term success of our state.

Last year, the State Legislature and Governor Hochul prioritized workers by making reforms to Tier 6 and other measures to support public employees. These efforts must continue in this year's budget to continue building a strong, stable public sector workforce that can meet the needs of all New Yorkers. CSEA is encouraged by Governor Hochul's commitment to workers in the Executive Budget, including enhanced protections for highway workers and other transportation employees, funding for childcare, education, healthcare, and more. However, more needs to be done. CSEA looks forward to collaborating with the State Legislature and Governor Hochul to address the issues facing the workforce in this year's budget.

Investing in Public Employees

Key Points

Recruitment and retention remain a challenge for the state and local governments. From 2020 to 2024 the state workforce lost roughly 12,000 employees. Local governments experienced similar declines in the same time frame. This has put immense pressure on the existing workforce, with state employees in 2023 accruing nearly 23 million overtime hours - a 42.6 percent increase over 2014 – at a cost of more than \$1 billion annually.

Governor Hochul and the State Legislature recognize this and have taken decisive action in the past few years to improve recruitment and retention. We are grateful for the legislature's support in making reforms to Tier 6, waiving civil service exam fees, eliminating salary withholdings for state employees, and more. However, more must be done to support the workforce.

- CSEA **supports PPGG Part V** to extend the waiver of state civil service fees. CSEA recommends **amending** the proposal to extend the waiver for two years instead of six months.
- CSEA **supports** the administrative action to extend the **NY HELPS** program through June 30, 2026
- CSEA **supports PPGG Part W** to establish an optional payment for newly hired state employees. CSEA recommend **amending** the proposal to require the executive to identify barriers to fully eliminate lag pay and report these findings to the State Senate and Assembly.
- CSEA **supports the inclusion** of legislation to establish a **25-year retirement plan** for firefighters employed by the Division of Military and Naval Affairs (DMNA), as proposed in **S.3655**.
- CSEA **opposes PPGG Part U** to eliminate the state’s reimbursement of the Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amounts (IRMAA) surcharge.

PPGG Part V – Civil Service Exam Fee Waiver

CSEA **supports** Governor Hochul’s proposal to extend the waiver of state civil service exam fees and the authorization for municipalities to waive them as well. However, the governor’s proposal only extends the moratorium for an additional six months, from December 31, 2025, to June 30, 2026. CSEA supports **extending the waiver for an additional two years** through December 31, 2027.

The public sector workforce is in constant competition with the private sector, where a person does not have to pay a fee to apply for a job. Civil service exam fees serve only as a barrier to employment, especially for those who are economically disadvantaged. Continuing to waive these fees is essential to the recruitment and retention of the public sector workforce. Many local governments have also recognized the barrier that these fees pose, with at least 10 counties opting to waive exam fees since the program’s inception.

NY HELPS

CSEA **supports** the administrative action to extend the NY HELPS program, which expedites hiring for all state and local government open-competitive civil service positions. As of September 2024, more than 18,000 appointments have been made through this program. While CSEA does not believe that this program is a long-term solution to the current staffing crisis, we are supportive of temporarily continuing the program to fill open positions at a faster rate.

PPGG Part W – Lag Pay Option

CSEA **supports** Governor Hochul’s proposal to establish a lag pay option for state employees. However, CSEA supports **including language** to require the executive to identify

barriers to fully eliminating the state payroll lag and report these findings to the State Senate and Assembly.

Governor Hochul and the State Legislature acted in last year's budget to eliminate the state payroll lag. This was scheduled to go into effect in July 2025. However, technological and processing restraints have prevented the state from instituting this change. In response, Governor Hochul has proposed an alternative, which provides new state employees with the option to receive a paycheck in the first two weeks but requires the employee to pay back the money interest-free over the following 14 pay-periods.

The existing payroll lag is a significant barrier to entering the state workforce. When an employee is hired by the state, they must wait four weeks or more for their first paycheck. For many, this can be the deciding factor in whether to accept a state job or look elsewhere. While the governor's proposal is not ideal, the lag pay option is a **short-term fix** that will ensure that new employees do not have to wait to be paid. However, the state should continue working towards the full elimination of the state payroll lag. As such, CSEA urges the State Legislature to include language in the final budget that will require a report on the barriers to eliminating the state payroll lag. The report will provide the legislature with the information necessary to pursue a full elimination of the state payroll lag.

Equity for DMNA Firefighters

CSEA **supports the inclusion** of legislation to establish a **25-year retirement plan** for firefighters employed by the Division of Military and Naval Affairs (DMNA), as proposed in **S.3655**. Under this plan, firefighters would be eligible for a pension equal to **50 percent of their final salary after 25 years of service**.

CSEA represents the firefighters employed by DMNA. These highly trained professionals provide essential fire protection and emergency response services at three Air National Guard Bases (ANGBs) across the state. These firefighters play an essential role in supporting military missions while also responding to local and national emergencies. Their responsibilities are equivalent to those of municipal firefighters, yet they do not receive equivalent benefits, leading to severe recruitment and retention challenges.

Approximately **65 percent of DMNA firefighters are Tier 6** members, meaning they must **work until age 63 to receive full retirement** benefits. Given the physically demanding nature of their profession, requiring firefighters to serve until this age is both impractical and unsustainable. This difference is even more stark when compared to professional firefighters employed by municipalities, who are entitled to retire after 20 years with 50 percent of their final average salary.

The disparity in benefits has directly contributed to a staffing crisis across fire houses at the three Air National Guard Bases. For example, Stratton ANGB is authorized for 27 firefighters but currently has only 16, with two additional retirements expected in the coming months. Total overtime costs for understaffed firehouses at the three bases exceed \$3 million annually.

This shortage not only places an excessive burden on existing firefighters but also jeopardizes the Air National Guard's mission. The U.S. Department of Defense mandates minimum staffing levels for firefighting personnel during aircraft movement, maintenance, and flight operations. If recruitment and retention trends persist, the state risks being unable to staff these bases for critical missions.

CSEA is committed to ensuring fair and equitable treatment for DMNA firefighters. By establishing a **25-year retirement plan**, the state can enhance recruitment and retention efforts, reduce excessive overtime costs, and ensure mission readiness at New York's Air National Guard Bases.

PPGG Part U – Eliminating the IRMAA Reimbursement

CSEA **opposes** Governor Hochul's proposal to eliminate the state's reimbursement of the Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amounts (IRMAA) surcharge.

Since 1966, the state has agreed to cover the Medicare Part B premium for retirees enrolled in the New York State Health Insurance Program (NYSHIP). The governor's proposal to eliminate the state's IRMAA reimbursement would sever the long-standing agreement between the state and public-sector retirees.

Retirees have much less flexibility to absorb cost increases than others. With the price of prescription drugs, groceries, and other everyday items constantly on the rise, they are already being stretched to their limits. For those living on a fixed income, any changes in out-of-pocket expenses for healthcare can substantially impact their budgets and financial well-being. As such, CSEA strongly opposes eliminating the state's reimbursement of the IRMAA surcharge. The state should not be targeting retirees to achieve spending cuts.

Highway Safety

Key Points

CSEA represents thousands of employees at the Department of Transportation (DOT), Thruway Authority, Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), local highway departments, departments of public works, and public transit systems. These dedicated professionals maintain our state's infrastructure, ensure the safety of the drivers and vehicles on our roads, and keep New Yorkers moving.

Every day, these employees put their lives on the line. From 2013 to 2022, work zone fatalities increased by 50 percent nationwide. In fact, highway workers are four times more likely to die on the job than the average worker. But the dangers extend beyond the road. DMV employees are also subject to violence by frustrated patrons, individuals who have failed their driving tests, and more. Additional actions must be taken to protect these employees.

- CSEA **supports TEDE Part Q** to make permanent and expand the Work Zone Speed Camera Program. CSEA recommends **amending** the proposal to **expand** the number of work zone speed cameras, **suspend** the vehicle registration of repeat offenders, and **increase penalties** for speeding in a non-camera work zone and for failing to move over.
- CSEA **supports TEDE Part R** to increase penalties for assaulting transportation workers.

TEDE Part Q – Strengthening the Work Zone Speed Camera Program

CSEA **supports** Governor Hochul’s proposal to make the work zone speed camera program permanent, expand it to the New York State Bridge Authority and Triborough Bridge & Tunnel Authority, and increase penalties for repeat offenders. However, CSEA supports strengthening the program further by:

- **Doubling the number of authorized work zone speed cameras** from 20 to 40 for DOT and from 10 to 20 for the Thruway Authority.
- **Suspending the registration** of any vehicle that receives **four or more** work zone speeding violations within 18 months.
- **Increasing penalties** for speeding in non-camera work zones and for failing to move over when legally required.

Tragically, in 2024, two State Thruway Authority employees, including CSEA member Stephen Ebling, were struck and killed on the job. In another harrowing incident caught on a dashboard camera, a CSEA-represented DOT employee was nearly killed when a box truck failed to move over for a maintenance crew¹. These cases underscore the ever-present risks faced by highway workers who are just trying to do their jobs.

The message to drivers must be made clear: **slow down and move over.**

We know that drivers slow down when work zone cameras are present. That is why CSEA supports increasing the number of cameras available to work zones across the state. Additionally, drivers who repeatedly put workers at risk must receive commensurate penalties. By increasing penalties for speeding in non-camera work zones and for failing to move over, as well as suspending registrations of vehicles that receive four or more work zone camera tickets, we can hold offenders accountable and deter reckless behaviors.

¹ Scan the QR code to view a NYS DOT dashcam video of this incident.



TEDE Part R – Transportation Worker Assaults

CSEA **supports** Governor Hochul’s proposal to elevate the penalty for assaulting a highway worker, DMV license examiner, or DMV representative from a Class A misdemeanor to a Class D felony.

These workers serve the public, often in situations where tensions run high—whether it’s an individual who just failed a driving test, a driver upset over a suspended license, or motorists frustrated by construction-related delays. Unfortunately, these workers too often experience workplace violence. In fact, a joint survey conducted by the DMV and CSEA found that over 50 percent of motor vehicle license examiners reported experiencing workplace violence, including instances of kidnapping, assault, and violent threats. Despite ongoing efforts to mitigate these threats, employees continue to endure dangerous workplace conditions.

This legislation sends a clear message: if you assault one of these employees, there will be serious consequences. Increasing penalties for assaulting these workers will deter future violence and help ensure employees can go to work without fear of being assaulted or killed.

State University of New York (SUNY)

Key Points

CSEA represents more than 13,000 workers across the State University of New York (SUNY) System, including at SUNY Hospitals, state operated campuses, community colleges, and System Administration. Our members are the backbone of the system, ensuring that SUNY continues to serve its students and the surrounding community. Governor Hochul’s Executive Budget includes several proposals that would impact SUNY and the CSEA members that work there.

- CSEA **supports** the proposal to increase capital funding for SUNY Upstate. CSEA recommends **increasing** the appropriation to **\$450 million**, a \$250 million increase over the executive proposal.
- CSEA **supports** the increased capital and operating appropriations for SUNY Downstate.
- CSEA **supports** the extension of the community college funding floor.
- CSEA **opposes PPGG Part Y** to grant authority for all 64 SUNY campuses to utilize design-build.

SUNY Upstate

CSEA **supports** Governor Hochul’s proposal to increase capital funding for SUNY Upstate. However, greater investment is necessary. We urge the state legislature to provide **\$450**

million in capital funding for SUNY Upstate, an increase of \$250 million from the executive’s proposal, to fund a **new emergency department, an expanded burn center, and additional operating rooms.**

SUNY Upstate is the only Level 1 Trauma Center serving 14 counties across Central New York and the North Country. It is a critical facility for more than 1.8 million New Yorkers, providing specialized emergency care, trauma services, and life-saving treatment. However, its emergency department—built more than 60 years ago—is not equipped to meet the demands of a growing and aging population. As a result, SUNY Upstate now has the second-longest emergency room wait times in the state, putting patient outcomes at risk.

These challenges will only be exacerbated by the upcoming expansion of the region’s workforce and population due to Micron’s historic investment in Central New York. Micron’s planned \$100 billion chip fabrication facility is expected to bring tens of thousands of new residents to the area, further increasing demand for medical services. Without immediate and substantial investment in SUNY Upstate’s infrastructure, the hospital will be unable to meet the needs of a rapidly growing community. The state must act now to ensure that SUNY Upstate has the capacity to provide high-quality emergency and trauma care for both current residents and the region’s future workforce.

SUNY Downstate

CSEA supports Governor Hochul’s Executive Budget proposal to provide \$100 million in operating support and \$450 million in capital support for SUNY Downstate.

SUNY Downstate is an essential healthcare provider in central Brooklyn, serving one of the most diverse and medically underserved communities in the state. The hospital provides life-saving care to thousands of patients each year, regardless of their ability to pay. However, years of financial strain and aging infrastructure have placed enormous pressure on the hospital and its workforce. This funding is critical to stabilizing SUNY Downstate’s finances and improving hospital facilities, which will allow the hospital to remain open and able to deliver essential healthcare services.

Community Colleges

CSEA supports Governor Hochul’s proposed extension of the community college funding floor.

Community colleges play a vital role in preparing New York’s workforce by providing accessible, affordable education and training for in-demand careers. They equip students with the skills needed to enter the workforce quickly, support career advancement, and help meet the evolving needs of industries across the state. Without the funding floor, these campuses would be subject to a \$124 million loss in formula aid due to enrollment declines. These cuts would hamper workforce development and reduce access to education across the state.

PPGG Part Y – Design Build for SUNY

CSEA **opposes** Governor Hochul’s proposal to grant carte blanche authority for all 64 SUNY campuses to utilize design-build.

Design-build is a project delivery method where a single entity is responsible for both the design and construction of a project. This approach consolidates control and accountability under one contractor, which often leads to reduced transparency and subpar construction quality. Without separate design and construction phases, there are fewer checks and balances to ensure that projects are completed on time, within budget, and meet the needs of the public.

Each SUNY campus already has access to design-build through the SUNY Construction Fund. This proposal would expand this so that each *campus* can utilize this authority. This broad expansion undermines the authority of the State Legislature to decide when this project delivery method is appropriate. In cases where a campus wants to use design-build, the legislature can review the request and enact standalone legislation to approve its use for specific projects. This system of checks and balances has worked, and the legislature should retain its role in approving design-build authority on a project-by-project basis.

Further, CSEA continues to worry that design-build will be used to privatize public assets. The expansion of design-build undermines the traditional role of public workers and entities in overseeing public construction projects and their management of state-owned infrastructure. Design-build often involves the outsourcing of public projects to private, for-profit companies, shifting away from public control and reducing accountability to taxpayers. The last thing New Yorkers need are public assets operated by private companies driven by a profit motive.

Improving Healthcare and Support Services

Key Points

Ensuring that New Yorkers have access to essential healthcare and support services is a fundamental responsibility of the state. As our population grows and the needs of vulnerable communities become more urgent, it is critical to invest in the systems that provide care and assistance. By prioritizing the well-being of those who rely on public healthcare, mental health services, and developmental support, the state can help bridge gaps in care, improve service delivery, and strengthen the safety net for the most at-risk individuals.

- CSEA recommends **increasing** funding for safety-net hospitals.
- CSEA **opposes HMH Part W, Subpart A** to expand Certified Nursing Assistants’ scope of practice.
- CSEA **supports** funding for 200 new state operated inpatient treatment beds and 100 new forensic treatment beds in New York City.

- CSEA recommends **amending PPGG Part FF** to include language to ensure that workers receive at least a 4 percent cost-of-living adjustment.

Safety Net Hospital Funding

CSEA recommends **increasing** the appropriation for safety-net hospitals, beyond the \$300 million provided in Governor Hochul’s Executive Budget. CSEA supports committing additional revenues from the **managed care organization (MCO) provider tax** to this fund.

Safety-net hospitals are essential to ensuring that vulnerable populations have access to the care they need. With many hospitals sharing the same funding pot, the proposed allocation of \$300 million is simply not enough to meet the growing need. Safety-net hospitals provide critical care to low-income, uninsured, and underinsured patients, and the financial pressures they face are mounting. Without adequate funding, the quality of care at these hospitals will erode, and some may even close, depriving at-risk communities of essential healthcare. More substantial investment is needed to ensure that these hospitals can continue to serve their communities and maintain capacity to deliver essential healthcare.

HMH Part V, Subpart A – Expanded Scope of Practice for CNAs

CSEA **opposes** Governor Hochul’s proposal to expand Certified Nursing Assistants’ scope of practice to include medication administration in nursing homes.

Registered Nurses (RNs) and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) undergo extensive, specialized training to administer medications safely and effectively. This training equips them with the clinical knowledge needed to understand the complexities of drug interactions, dosages, and potential side effects. The expertise of RNs and LPNs is crucial for ensuring patient safety and preventing medication errors. Expanding the scope of practice for Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) to administer medications poses serious risks to patient care and undermines the high standards of the nursing practice.

This proposal seeks to replace licensed nurses with CNAs for medication administration, primarily as a cost-cutting measure. Patient safety and the standards of the healthcare profession should not be compromised to save costs. Licensed nurses should remain responsible for medication administration.

Expanding OMH Inpatient Beds

CSEA **supports** Governor Hochul’s proposal to create 200 new state operated inpatient treatment beds and 100 new forensic treatment beds in New York City.

Unfortunately, mental health needs have skyrocketed across our state and nation. In New York, nearly 1 in 5 residents experience poor mental health. In addition, more than 20 percent of state-operated inpatient mental health treatment beds have been eliminated since 2014. This has resulted in inaccessible care and crises related to untreated mental illness.

In last year's budget, the State Legislature and Governor Hochul took steps to address this crisis, investing \$55 million to add 200 new inpatient psychiatric beds at state-operated psychiatric facilities. This year, Governor Hochul builds on this progress by adding 300 additional beds. With this added capacity, we can help those with a severe mental illness receive the care that they need.

HMH Part FF – Targeted Inflationary Increase

CSEA recommends **amending** Governor Hochul's proposal to provide a targeted inflationary increase to non-profit providers that contract with the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). CSEA recommends **including language** to ensure that workers receive at least a 4 percent cost-of-living adjustment.

CSEA represents employees at voluntary not-for-profit entities who provide direct care to New Yorkers with developmental disabilities. Despite the importance of this work and the challenging nature of these professions, Direct Support Professionals continue to face low and often unlivable wages.

While the Governor's Executive Budget includes a targeted inflationary increase, it does not include language to ensure that any of it goes directly to workers. Without this language, these funds will be used to fill budget gaps and fund facility operations. CSEA recommends including language to ensure that direct care workers receive at least a 4 percent cost-of-living adjustment.

Investing in the Childcare Workforce

Key Points

CSEA represents 10,000 home-based childcare providers throughout the state. Our members are predominately women and people of color who provide affordable, quality, and licensed childcare to both private-pay and subsidized families in urban and rural parts of the state with limited access to care. Governor Hochul's Executive Budget includes several proposals that would positively impact these providers.

- CSEA **supports ELFA Part P** to create a childcare substitute pool. CSEA recommends **amending** the proposal to clearly assign liability to the private entities that manage the childcare substitute pool. CSEA also recommends **amending** the proposal to ensure that a non-profit entity is responsible for managing the pool.
- CSEA **supports** the \$10 million appropriation to fund renovations and repairs for family childcare programs.
- CSEA **supports** the creation of the New York Coalition for Child Care.

ELFA Part P – Childcare Substitute Pool

CSEA **supports** Governor Hochul’s proposal to create a childcare substitute pool. However, CSEA supports **including language** to clearly assign liability to the entities that manage the childcare substitute pool. CSEA also supports **amending** the proposal to ensure that a non-profit entity is responsible for managing the pool.

Home-based childcare providers often face immense pressure to work even when they are sick or have a family emergency because finding qualified substitutes is nearly impossible. Without backup care, they may have to reduce the number of children they can care for, or even close for the day, disrupting the routines of families and causing financial strain. A childcare substitute pool addresses this issue by providing trained professionals who can step in when needed, ensuring providers can take necessary time off while maintaining stable, high-quality care for children.

However, CSEA is concerned about the lack of clarity around liability and employment responsibilities. It is unclear who would be responsible for workers’ compensation, payroll taxes, and other employment protections, as well as how liability would be handled in cases of accidents or misconduct. Language should be included in the final budget to ensure that the entity operating the childcare substitute pool is treated as an employer and is therefore liable.

Further, CSEA is concerned that a for-profit entity managing the childcare substitute pool could charge exorbitant fees to access substitutes, creating a financial burden for home-based childcare providers who are already operating on tight margins. This could deter providers from using the pool, ultimately undermining the purpose of this proposal. To prevent this, the state should allow a qualified not-for-profit organization, like a Child Care Resource & Referral agency, to manage the program. This will ensure that substitutes are accessible and affordable for providers without unnecessary added costs.

Capital Funding for Family Childcare Programs

CSEA **supports** Governor Hochul’s proposed \$10 million to fund renovations and repairs for family childcare programs.

Home-based providers often struggle with the cost of maintaining safe, high-quality spaces for children, and this funding will help address critical needs like safety upgrades, accessibility improvements, and facility repairs. By supporting these providers, the state is ensuring more families have access to stable, high-quality childcare.

Creating the New York Coalition for Child Care

CSEA **supports** Governor Hochul’s proposal to create the New York Coalition for Child Care and her goal of achieving universal childcare access.

Establishing the New York Coalition for Child Care is a critical step toward achieving

the Governor's goal of universal childcare in the state. This coalition would bring together diverse stakeholders—business leaders, labor unions, and childcare providers—to identify sustainable funding solutions. By working collaboratively, the coalition can help expand subsidies, reduce out-of-pocket expenses for families, and ensure that childcare providers are better supported, ensuring that all New Yorkers have access to high-quality childcare.

Other Proposals

Key Points

- CSEA **supports ELFA Part C** to prohibit internet-enabled devices in school. CSEA recommends **amending** the proposal to ensure that employee input is considered in plan development and implementation.
- CSEA **supports** the additional \$50 million in Temporary Municipal Assistance.
- CSEA **supports** the \$150 million capital appropriation for the State Museum.

ELFA Part C – Prohibiting Internet-Enabled Devices

CSEA **supports** Governor Hochul's proposal to prohibit internet-enabled devices in schools. However, CSEA supports **including language** to ensure that employees are engaged in the development and execution of plans to implement this proposal.

Banning internet-enabled devices like smartphones in schools benefit both students and staff by reducing distractions and improving focus in the classroom. When students aren't preoccupied with their phones, they are more engaged in lessons, leading to better academic outcomes and fewer disruptions for teachers. This also helps staff enforce rules more consistently and fosters a more interactive and respectful learning environment.

However, CSEA represents non-pedagogical staff in school districts that are likely to be involved in enforcing these policies. At schools that have already implemented similar policies, CSEA members have reported contentious interactions with students who do not want to have their devices confiscated. As such, employees should have a role in the development and implementation of these plans to ensure that they are adequate to ensure their safety.

Funding Local Governments

CSEA **supports** Governor Hochul's proposal to provide \$50 million in additional funding to municipalities.

Last year, the enacted state budget included an increase to the Aid and Incentives to Municipalities (AIM) Program for the first time in 15 years. Governor Hochul's Executive Budget once again includes \$50 million in temporary municipal assistance. This funding is the largest

source of unrestricted aid to local governments, which allows them to continue providing essential services to communities across the state.

Funding for the State Museum

CSEA **supports** Governor Hochul's proposed investment of \$150 million to renovate the State Museum.

The State Museum serves as a vital resource for students, educators, and visitors, showcasing New York's rich history. This investment will enhance exhibits, improve accessibility, and update facilities to better serve the public for generations to come. By funding these renovations, the state is ensuring that the museum remains a world-class institution.

Conclusion

CSEA appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony on these critical issues that impact CSEA members, their families, and the communities they serve. From protecting highway workers and ensuring an equitable retirement for DMNA firefighters, to investing in public services and strengthening our state's infrastructure, we urge the State Legislature to prioritize policies that support New York's workforce and the people who rely on them. This year's budget presents an important opportunity to make meaningful investments that will improve the lives of working people across the state. We look forward to working with the Legislature and the Governor to ensure that the final budget reflects these priorities.