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March 24th Budget Issues

Dear Friends,

As the New York State Legislature and Governor Andrew Cuomo get down to the wire on passing the FY 2017 New York State budget there remain several key issues which members of the Business and Labor Coalition of New York are still pressing.

This brief report provides highlights of the debate and we urge you to contact your assembly and senate members and the Governor's office to make sure we pass the best budget possible.

Paramount issues remain: the drive for a **\$15 minimum wage, infrastructure investment in New York and parity in infrastructure funding**. Additionally, we urge the implementation of **family paid leave benefits, and full and equitable funding of CUNY and the Professional Staff Congress members**.

We ask for you to review the **NYS AFL-CIO position on the restoration of diminishing workers' compensation benefits**, the continued **efforts by the Public Employees Federation to achieve a contract with the Cuomo Administration**, and the **New York State United Teacher's (NYSUT's) efforts to achieve equitable school funding**. Finally we ask you to strongly consider the **Fiscal Policy Institute's call for NYS to enact a 1% plan for New York Tax Fairness**.

Finally we encourage you to listen to the premiere episode of our new radio show on WABC77 "**Common Ground: Building and Caring for the Future of New York**," available at the following link: [Radio Show](#)



Thanks for your interest and support of these key issues.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pass Paid Family Leave!

CUNY Deserves Fair Funding

Tax Fairness for New York State

Restore Workers Compensation

Public Employee Federation (PEF) Contract

Support for Public Education

Upcoming BALCONY Events

PAID FAMILY LEAVE



More than ever, employment practices are out of pace with working families. Today the majority of parents of young children both men and women, work. Trends show that these working families are also increasingly responsible for elderly or disabled relatives. Without a paid family leave policy, young parents often feel forced to return to work before their children are ready to be without a parent. The Business and Labor Coalition of New York (BALCONY) supports passage of paid family leave for New Yorkers."

- Lou Gordon, Director of the Business and Labor Coalition of New York



Over 100 Business Owners and Associations Sign on in Support of Paid Family Leave Proposal

*Week, Employee-Funded Paid Family Leave Program in the Budget
Small Business Owners Say Paid Family Leave Would Give Them a
Competitive Advantage - without Hurting Their Bottom Line
Albany, NY - Business owners from across the state spoke out today in
support of paid family leave, urging the legislature to pass a strong bill
in the upcoming budget.*

The New York Paid Family Leave Insurance Campaign released a list of over one hundred business owners - the majority of whom are small businesses - and associations that have signed on in support of a paid family leave proposal that would create an employee-funded expansion of the state's Temporary Disability Insurance Program (TDI) to provide all employees with up to 12 weeks of paid family leave to welcome a new baby or care for a seriously ill family member. The associations together represent tens of thousands of New York businesses, with more businesses and associations signing on every day. The full list of current business supporters can be found here.

For the full statement please click [HERE](#) .

PSC-CUNY FUNDING

BALCONY Joins the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) and the CUNY Rising Alliance in Protesting Gov. Cuomo's Proposed Cuts to Public Higher Ed.



Lou Gordon & Barbara Bowen

Thursday, March 10, the Business and Labor Coalition of New York (BALCONY) joined the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) for a joint labor rally that included CWA Local 1180, DC37, NYSUT and other members of the CUNY Rising Alliance outside the Governor's 3rd Avenue NYC offices. The event was attended by several hundred activists, students, teachers, and college employees.

The main focus of the rally was to protest Governor Cuomo's plans to cut state funding to the City University of New York by \$485 million despite a \$1 billion state budget surplus.

Speaking to the assembled crowd PSC President Barbara Bowen and longtime BALCONY friend referred to the cuts as "massive" and "crushing" and said they represent a pattern of systematic disinvestment in CUNY.

Professor Bowen's message was clear: higher education must be a right, not a privilege. She incited the crowd to raise their voices and fight the Governor's plan with the chant "they say cut back, we say fight back!"

BALCONY Director Lou Gordon said that it was "critical that New Yorkers come together in support of affordable public higher education to the benefit of all our citizens."

The burden of compensating for the nearly half-billion dollars the Governor proposes to cut from the state's CUNY funding would fall on New York City, an encumbrance that is compounded by the Governor's proposal that the city also take on greater fiscal responsibility for Medicaid costs and sales tax revenues.

The rally also brought out a large swath of CUNY employees, from custodians to teachers assistants and administrators, who have labored without a contract with the state for more than 6 years, many making less than \$10/hour.

BALCONY co-chair and New York State United Teachers Executive Vice President Andrew Pallotta did not mince words, saying simply, "CUNY employees deserve to be compensated at a competitive level and the Governor must fund the CUNY system."



FPI Calls for Tax Fairness in New York



Wealthy New Yorkers Urge Governor Cuomo and Legislature to Enact 1% Plan for New York Tax Fairness

Some of the wealthiest New Yorkers have sent an open letter to Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature urging passage of the "1% Plan for New York Tax Fairness" to replace the temporary 'millionaires tax' set to expire at the end of next year. The Fiscal Policy Institute's 1% Plan calls for new tax rates ranging from 7.65% to 9.99% applied to new tax brackets starting at \$665,000, the income threshold for the top 1% of New Yorkers. The plan also calls for continuation of the lower rates now in place for lower and middle-income New Yorkers.

[Click here for the PDF of 1% Plan](#)

[Click here for the PDF of Press Release](#)

Restore Workers Compensation



Injured Workers Must Be Protected

By **Mario Cilento - President NYS AFL-CIO**



José Valerio was earning a decent wage in New York City working as a welder for 10 years before an accident in 2014 left him with severe third-degree burns to his hand. The injury later developed into Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD), causing constant severe pain. The father of four is still under a doctor's care, relying on workers' compensation benefits as he looks for ways to get back into the job market.

Today, while José struggles to recover, there are efforts underway to change the workers' compensation system in ways that would not only create additional barriers for workers like him, but make it even less likely for injured workers to maintain a decent standard of living.

Changes being touted by the business community would cut benefits and limit access to care.

It is that very basic premise that must be protected which is why we are urging that this proposal be defeated. Workers have a right to be protected from injury on the job and they have a right to be compensated and cared for should an injury occur.

You can take action by texting the word PROTECT to 877877 to be connected to your legislator or [clicking here to send them a letter.](#)

[You can read the OPPOSE memo here.](#)

Public Employee Federation (PEF) **Budget Views and Contract Negotiations**



PEF President Wayne Spence Testifies on the State Workforce

PEF shares insiders' budget view with lawmakers

Story and Photos By SHERRY HALBROOK

Even after listening to many hours of testimony over several days in early February about the governor's proposed budget, state legislators said they wanted to hear still more from PEF members about certain problematic issues.

SEE [**VIDEO**](#) OF JOINT BUDGET HEARING - PAROLE

PEF President Wayne Spence led a group of the union's members testifying at three joint legislative hearings held February 3 and 4 in Albany on the governor's 2016-17 Executive Budget proposal. Hearings on mental hygiene and the state workforce were held back-to-back in a marathon session Wednesday, February 3.

Spence told lawmakers at the workforce hearing that while the budget calls for no layoffs or new plans for closing state facilities, it fails to adequately address the chronic under-staffing of many agencies that forces them to rely on costly overtime and private consultants to cover the gaps.

For the full article click [**HERE**](#).

PS&T contract team lines up more bargaining dates with the state



Since the PS&T contract negotiations resumed in late fall, after a transition in the PEF administration, talks between the union and the state have progressed. PEF's contract team chair, Jemma Marie-Hanson, described the bargaining talks as "fruitful."

The state has agreed to meet nine days to negotiate between the end of February and early May. Marie-Hanson said that is a positive sign. Both negotiating teams have presented articles, and the state is expected to place its remaining proposals on the table by March 1. PEF has reserved the right with management to open articles as needed during the negotiation process.

"We are looking forward to productive meetings with the state as we move forward," Marie-Hanson said. The Communicator continues to highlight three of PEF's PS&T contract team members in each issue, so you can understand each of their roles.

For more click [HERE!](#)

Public Education

Teacher's Choice tops UFT needs from Council



By **Linda Ocasio**

UFT President Michael Mulgrew on March 16 urged Council members to put additional money in next year's city budget to support the programs that help teachers help students: Community Learning Schools, the Positive Learning Collaborative and Teacher's Choice.

A significant increase in Teacher's Choice, which the Council has funded for more than 25 years, topped his list of requests at the annual preliminary budget hearing.

"Many teachers are spending from \$500 to \$1,000 from their own paychecks to make sure their students have what they need," he said. "Some schools expect parents to help financially, but many of our inner-city parents cannot afford that."

Last year, after UFT members participated in an all-out social media and lobbying campaign to restore Teacher's Choice, the Council boosted its funding, so each teacher received \$122, up from \$77 the previous year, to cover out-of-pocket spending on classroom supplies. A decade ago, Mulgrew noted, the Council's \$20 million commitment to Teacher's Choice meant \$250 for each teacher.

For the full article please click [here](#)

With 82 districts facing negative tax caps, Educational Conference Board renews call for \$2.2 billion increase



The Educational Conference Board, citing a record high 82 districts facing negative tax caps, sent a letter to state legislators urging them to provide a \$2.2 billion school funding increase in this year's budget.

The ECB press release and letter to legislators follows.

[PDF link](#)

Upcoming BALCONY Events

**BALCONY/MT. SINAI SELIKOFF CENTER FORUM -
MAY 12th**

**Health Care in New York: Successes, Failures and
Challenges in 2016**



BALCONY ON BROADWAY - JUNE 8th

ON YOUR FEET - THE GLORIA ESTEFAN STORY



BALCONY MEMBER DIRECTORY



(Click [HERE](#) for the PDF version of the Membership Directory by Sector)

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