



State of the State: Reactions to Gov. Paterson's address

January 6, 2010

A sample of reaction to Gov. David Paterson's State of the State address on Jan. 6:

Kenneth Adams, president and CEO, The Business Council of New York State Inc.

"Gov. David Paterson's call to reform state finances must be taken seriously by the state Legislature to allow our economy to recover.

"The Business Council supports the creation of a new flagship economic development program to replace the Empire Zone program that targets business important to the growth of our economy and with statewide eligibility.

"However, the governor's plan falls short in supporting new capital investment and job retention by New York companies. Significant capital investment by in-state companies that help them become more competitive and retain jobs in the state should also be a component of the program."

Brian Sampson, executive director, Unshackle Upstate

"Right now, the governor is talking a good game, even calling out special interests. But this is just what we heard last year, and last year we had the biggest budget blunder in our history! He must keep in mind that New Yorkers want their financial burden drastically lowered, period.

"This year, the governor must hold the line and push back against Albany's typical tax and spend policies. Anything less is unacceptable."

Billy Easton, executive director, Alliance for Quality Education

"Gov. Paterson is proposing to create an economic recovery based on knowledge, technology and innovation, but he has a consistent record of proposing education cuts that will deny to many of New York state's children the education needed to succeed. Paterson has also highlighted the need for real property tax reform, but if he turns around and proposes school aid cuts, then his budget will mean higher, not lower, property taxes for New Yorkers."

Sen. John Sampson (D-Brooklyn), the top Democrat in the Senate

"For decades, the Senate spent, borrowed, and taxed New York into fiscal crisis. We will reverse decades of fiscal irresponsibility by reigning in out-of-control spending, consolidating state agencies, and putting the taxpayers' priorities above all else."

State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli (D)

“The lessons of last year should be more than enough incentive to finally fix our state’s long list of problems. I don’t agree with everything in [Paterson’s] agenda, but I do agree that state government needs to take a serious look in the mirror. And that self-examination should include a real reconsideration of our budget process. “The fact is, New York has never been good at balancing its checkbook. And now the state is living paycheck to paycheck.”

“Next year’s budget must reflect what New Yorkers desperately need—a state government that doesn’t make promises it can’t keep and bases its budget on reality, not political pipe dreams.”

Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb (R-Canandaigua)

“We cannot miss this opportunity to deliver on the unfulfilled promise of reform. I want the governor to succeed. New York state needs him to succeed. It’s time for everyone serving in state government to stop the blame game and partisan finger-pointing and decide if they are for reform or not.”

Stephen Acquario, executive director, New York State Association of Counties

“Governor David Paterson introduced a blueprint for New York State to emerge from this recession. Fostering job growth is critical for New York State to come out of this economic downturn stronger than before. All efforts should focus on a renewed commitment to retaining and creating jobs in all areas of the state.”

Daniel Sisto, president, Healthcare Association of New York State

“It is interesting ... that he referred to this season as a ‘winter of reckoning.’ For health care providers, it has already been two years of reckoning.

“What we need to see is the governor’s plan to offset health care service reductions and job losses created by those cuts. In just the last 20 months, the state has imposed five rounds of crippling health care cuts and a new tax that have cost health care providers more than \$1 billion a year.

“[Paterson] cannot have it both ways. He cannot claim to improve our health care system and then propose still more health care cuts, which are expected to be included in his forthcoming budget plan.”

Arthur “Jerry” Kremer, chairman, New York Affordable Reliable Electricity Alliance (NY AREA)

Kremer said a key economic development initiative missing from Paterson’s speech was a call to renew a provision called Article X, which creates a streamlined process for siting and building power plants.

“Paterson’s speech properly emphasized the severe economic and budget challenges that New York today faces. One of the most sensible and overdue steps that the Legislature can take to revitalize the economy is to enact a new power plant siting law. This will be a true stimulus to New York’s economy.”