

What they're saying about Cuomo's 2016 budget plan



3 HOURS AGO • [ROBERT HARDING](#) |
ROBERT.HARDING@LEE.NET

Gov. Andrew Cuomo outlined his executive budget proposal Wednesday in Albany and provided more details about some of his key proposals.

Here is a collection of statements from state leaders, business groups and nonprofit organizations reacting to the governor's plan:

State Attorney General Eric

Schneiderman

"I congratulate Governor Cuomo for presenting a strong progressive agenda that will expand opportunities for New Yorkers during today's State of the State. New Yorkers have always worked together to overcome tough challenges, and this year we have the opportunity to do so once again. We can raise wages for the lowest paid workers, protect immigrants, help families find affordable housing, create jobs by upgrading our aging infrastructure, reform our criminal justice system to give more young people the second chance they need, and root out the abuses of power that have plagued Albany.

"As I said last year -- and recent convictions have confirmed -- we need to bring real reform to the halls of power. I am particularly pleased that the Governor has joined the call to tackle the issue of outside income for legislators. His proposal is an important step forward. The time has come to pass comprehensive ethics reform to restore public trust and confidence in our government.

"I look forward to working with the governor and all of our state's leaders to pass these and other proposals to make New York safer and stronger for all our communities."

State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli

"The Governor put forth an ambitious agenda to tackle our growing infrastructure needs and build for the future.

"The state's economy continues to be in a stronger position, which has fueled revenue growth for the state and put New York on solid financial footing. There are cautionary signs in the global marketplace that should be watched closely. And, more needs to be done to assist the areas of the state not equally sharing in the state's economic prosperity.

"This is a good time for our state to shape our future and agree to a workable plan that

makes government more ethical, transparent and accountable to all New Yorkers.

“In the coming weeks, my office will thoroughly review the Executive Budget, examine the long-term impact of these proposals and provide a detailed analysis.”

Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan

Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan's 2016 State of the Sta...  



Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins

“Unfortunately, in the past, good ideas have been met with resistance and ultimately blocked in the Republican controlled Senate. While lofty and ambitious goals are welcome, Albany must become a place of action and not just political posturing. The speech had some good ideas including our mutual goals of passing meaningful ethics reforms including restricting outside income, raising the minimum wage, providing paid family leave, lowering the tax burden on families and businesses, protecting our most vulnerable, fully funding our public education system, and moving our economy forward. Now it is up to the Senate Republicans to stop blocking these proposals and instead work with us, the Governor and the Assembly Majority to move New York State forward.”

Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb

“The governor has labeled his budget proposal ‘Built To Lead,’ but we must remember that anything we build is on the backs of hard-working taxpayers.

The Executive Budget begins the process of policy discussions and developing a prudent spending plan for the next fiscal year. The governor has proposed an agenda that comes with a price tag attached. We need to see specific details and dollar figures, and over the next several weeks, lawmakers must ensure that spending remains in check.

As Assembly Minority Leader, I was encouraged to hear the governor put forward priorities

that fall in line with a number of Conference proposals, including: pension forfeitures for convicted officials, a Constitutional Convention, greater resources for our State Police and focus on public safety, tax relief for small businesses, tax credits for teachers, and a substantial investment in education.

However, over the coming months any final state budget agreement should include several measures that were not referenced today, including:

An end to the 'three-men-in-a-room' budget negotiations, which have enabled Albany's culture of corruption;

A specific plan to reform Common Core, which has gone ignored for too long as frustration mounts for students, teachers and parents;

A clear commitment to end the Gap Elimination Adjustment in 2016;

Equity in the amount of infrastructure dollars spent upstate and downstate;

Acknowledgement that New York's heroin epidemic must be addressed through stronger prevention and treatment efforts; and

Immediate, common-sense relief to localities from unfunded mandates. Competitions and consolidation will not provide the solution property taxpayers need.

Today is the start of setting a new tone for New York and a new era for Albany. As we work toward a final state budget, I hope we have learned from the failures of the business-as-usual approach, and begin moving the state and the Capitol in an open, effective and positive direction."



Cuomo unveils \$145.3 billion budget plan, initiatives

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Gov. Andrew Cuomo's \$145.3 billion budget proposal unveiled Wednesday proposes spending the state's \$2.3 billion windfall from court settlements to house the poor and homeless, freeze Thruway tolls and make large investments in public infrastructure.

Heather Briccetti, president and CEO of the Business Council of New York State

"Governor Cuomo has laid out an ambitious agenda that includes many legislative proposals championed by The Business Council of New York State. We are particularly pleased that the Governor has once again kept spending growth at or below 2 percent. We are also looking forward to ensuring the Governor's small business tax cut proposals are enacted and the Property Tax Cap is not weakened. Despite these and other positives, we remain adamantly opposed to the Governor's proposal to raise the wage for entry-level

workers to \$15 an hour. Its impact will be especially significant among young and low-skilled workers seeking entry-level jobs, and in areas upstate that have yet to recover losses sustained during the Great Recession. The Business Council also has real concerns about the proposed paid leave mandate on employers. While we reserve judgment until the full details are released, we believe this mandate would be particularly harmful to the same small businesses the Governor is supporting through other budget initiatives. Today is the beginning of negotiations over the 2016-17 Executive Budget, and we will have much more to say as we go over its details and work with the Governor and the Legislature to enact pro-growth, pro-business legislation supported by our members.”

NFIB New York state director Michael Durant

“Today’s address by Governor Cuomo was heavy on rhetoric, light on details and full of conflicting messages for small business. The Governor both touts the importance of small employers to New York’s economy, yet continues to push proposals which directly threaten their viability. From the push to dramatically increase the minimum wage to the renewed effort to mandate paid leave, small businesses are directly looking at significant cost increases in which no tax cut could offset.

"Additionally, we are encouraged that the Governor will address critical infrastructure needs throughout New York, however this is pending clarity on how this significant investment will be funded.

"It is important over the coming weeks that the needs of small business trump political fanfare. Small employers are counting on the Governor and legislators to avoid painting business with a broad bush and understand the vast differences between Main Street and Wall Street."

Unshackle Upstate Executive Director Greg Biryla

“We applaud Governor Cuomo for advancing a budget proposal that adheres to a self-imposed 2-percent spending cap. We’re also encouraged by the Governor’s commitment to make significant investments in our crumbling infrastructure. It’s no secret that Upstate communities have struggled to maintain the roads, bridges and water infrastructure – this investment will provide much-needed funds to address this problem.

"There were several proposals with which we strongly disagree. First and foremost, our organization believes that a \$15 minimum wage will do more harm than good - especially for Upstate small businesses, farms, taxpayers and consumers. Increasing the minimum wage by an unprecedented 67 percent will lead to the loss of at least 200,000 jobs across the state, tax increases and a higher cost of living. That’s simply unaffordable and unacceptable. We also have serious concerns about the impact of a paid leave mandate on Upstate employers.

"As the leading voice for Upstate taxpayers, we remain opposed to any system that uses public dollars to support political campaigns. Such a system simply creates more opportunity for corruption and wastes public funds that would be better spent on tax relief

and infrastructure investment.

"As budget negotiations continue, we will continue to advocate on behalf of Upstate businesses and taxpayers."

Julie Hart, New York state government relations director for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

"It is the goal of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) to make cancer a priority of our government leaders. ACS CAN applauds Governor Cuomo for taking this bold step that will help women in their fight against breast cancer. Early detection of cancer means lives will be saved. By making the fight against cancer a priority, children will get to spend more time with their parents, parents will be able to watch their children grow, and grandparents will have more time to spend with their grandkids.

"We look forward to working with Governor Cuomo and the state legislature to help reach all women and men and to make life saving cancer screenings available to them."

Rafael Cestero, president and CEO of the Community Preservation Corporation

"I applaud Governor Cuomo and his team for proposing an ambitious housing plan to create and preserve 100,000 affordable units for New Yorkers of all incomes across all corners of the state. For more than 25 years, CPC has partnered with the State to drive private investment and address the complex housing and community revitalization needs of cities from Long Island to Buffalo. Throughout the last six years we have seen the impact of the Governor's economic development initiatives, and I am excited that his new housing plan will continue to advance those efforts by infusing billions of dollars and much needed resources to our upstate communities.

"For New York City and many cities across our state, homelessness is the most urgent housing and humanitarian issue we face. Today the Governor has put New York State at the forefront by committing an unprecedented level of resources to ensuring that our most vulnerable citizens will have an opportunity to get a hand-up, get off the streets, and into a stable and supportive environment where they can get their lives back on track.

"As the Administration moves forward with these bold plans we look forward to continuing our work together to help advance the programs that will be critical to expanding and preserving the state's affordable housing stock, revitalizing our cities, and addressing the homeless crisis."

Susan Lerner, executive director of Common Cause/NY

"The Governor's rhetoric is a rebuke to the systematic corruption that now defines New York State politics. Two juries have made clear that the Albany status quo is not only unacceptable, it's criminal. We need a robust commitment to comprehensive reform, which at the minimum includes the Clean Conscience pledge to limit/ban outside income,

close the LLC loophole, and increase transparency in discretionary funding. Two out of three is not enough. We will not allow ethics reform to be buried. Talk is cheap, New Yorkers expect results. It's time to get to work."

Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino, 2014 Republican gubernatorial candidate

"Governor Cuomo saying he's going to clean up corruption is like OJ saying he's going to find the real killer. If he really wanted to regain the public's trust, he'd finally appoint a special prosecutor to investigate whether he broke state laws -- and it's pretty clear he did -- when closing the Moreland Commission.

"The governor's infrastructure pronouncements are simply delusional. For five years he's failed to find \$3 billion in funding for the new Tappan Zee Bridge, and now he's throwing out pie-in-the-sky ideas that could cost taxpayers \$100 billion or more. There's a reason companies like GE and so many middle class families are leaving our state.

"Rather than buckling down and doing the hard work required to make New York State economically competitive again; instead of working to rebuild a jobs and business base robust enough to revitalize our infrastructure; instead of pushing for a state term limits law that would revitalize state government, Mr. Cuomo is playing disingenuous games with proposals he knows will never happen. If they did, the state would be bankrupted.

"It's sad to say, but this is no longer a serious governor."

Manufacturers Alliance of New York State President Randy Wolken

"Today, Governor Cuomo presented his 2016 State budget plan. It is clear that he is prepared to continue working with his Legislative colleagues in tackling many of our State's significant issues. Manufacturers will be especially pleased to hear that the Governor has proposed various business tax cuts to include a much need tax cut for small businesses. Of additional note, the Governor offered specific reform plans to address key, long-term concerns within the state's budget including a freeze on Thruway toll increases and a significant investment in our State's transportation network and infrastructure. These are all welcomed initiatives by the State's hard working manufacturing community.

"MACNY applauds Governor Cuomo's continued dedication to getting New York State back on track. We look forward to further reviewing his 2016 budget proposal and working with both the Administration and the Legislature on seeing this budget through to completion."

The Doe Fund Founder George McDonald

"Those of us on the front lines of homelessness and re-entry have known for years that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to our greatest social challenges. It's not just about permanent housing. Nor is supportive housing the panacea we've been waiting for. Nor can it only be about shelters. A real solution to homelessness and re-entry is flexible and holistic; it must be rich in services and meet people where they are, uplifting them a step a

time This plan does exactly that."

New York City Council Transportation Chairman Ydanis Rodriguez

"The proposals outlined in the Governor's State of the State address today are ambitious and have the potential to modernize our city's subways in buses in numerous ways. His vision for technology and capital upgrades in stations can provide a much needed face lift to our transit system. Yet most of all, the Governor's recognition that public transit is key to the continued economic growth here in New York is paramount to building a sustainable future for New York. These forward-thinking initiatives set forth a strong framework in which we can grow and thrive for the coming decades."

New York Farm Bureau President Dean Norton

"Governor Andrew Cuomo is moving forward with some major budget proposals that will impact agriculture across the state in positive and negative ways. New York Farm Bureau has advocated on a host of issues mentioned in the State of the State, and many of the Governor's requests reflect his interest to improving conditions for family farms across the state.

"New York Farm Bureau is hopeful his efforts to substantially increase the Environmental Protection Fund will assist farmers with expanded water quality, conservation and farmland preservation programs that are widely used. In addition, his request to offer a 100% tax credit on Thruway tolls for farm vehicles that use EZ Pass is a sensible approach to helping farms save money while at the same time making it easier to move their products around New York. Improving rural infrastructure also remains a priority for New York Farm Bureau, and we are pleased to see additional funding as well to improve roads and bridges in the upstate and Long Island regions.

"There is also support for agriculture reflected in funding for critical research. Plus, the Governor has maintained his commitment to marketing initiatives, like Taste NY, that let our neighbors and the world know about the healthy food and products that come from our farms.

"Despite these positive endeavors, New York Farm Bureau remains deeply concerned about the impact of a \$15 minimum wage on our farms' bottom lines. Many of our members tell us they will be forced to make tough choices should it pass, choices like reducing staff, changing what they grow and how they grow it, or just leaving farming altogether. We encourage Governor Cuomo to continue working with Farm Bureau to find better ways to promote job growth, better wages, and new opportunities for our family farms and their employees."

Make the Road New York co-Executive Director Deborah Axt

"Make the Road members have taken to the streets for many years to call for a livable minimum wage in our state; we are proud to stand with the Governor today in the fight to win \$15 an hour for all New York workers. It is time for our state to become a national leader on ending worker exploitation, and we look forward to working with the Governor to

win \$15 statewide in all sectors.

"One thing that will help make the minimum wage real for workers is the Governor's announcement that the Department of Labor and all eligible state agencies will be providing U-visa certifications to immigrants who assist in eradicating crime of all sorts. For immigrant families to participate in ending wage theft, we need exactly what this initiative provides: an aggressive approach to protecting and defending the folks who dare to stand up to wage theft and crime in our state.

"The Governor did not specifically speak today to other ways to eradicate wage theft statewide, but we anticipate working closely together to make the full minimum wage real for carwashers, restaurant workers, construction workers, and ALL workers.

"Finally, we applaud the Governor's push to provide paid family leave for all workers in New York state. Every single child deserves for their parents to be able to spend real time with them during the key first months of life."

Alliance for Quality Education Executive Director Billy Easton

"His school aid proposal of almost \$1 billion falls almost \$2 billion short of what our schools need. Once again Governor Cuomo has ignored the Campaign for Fiscal Equity and the tremendous inequities between rich and poor schools. There is almost \$9,000 per student spending gap between rich and poor schools but his budget only provides \$266 million of the \$4.4 billion in foundation aid that is due as a result of CFE lawsuit. "

SUNY Student Assembly President Thomas Mastro

"We appreciate the Governor's investment in SUNY and support of keeping budget decisions within the system. Governor Cuomo continues to show dedication toward ensuring that we remain the greatest system of public higher education in the country.

"However, we are disappointed in the Governor's failure to include in his budget a sensible Maintenance of Effort plan that keeps pace with the reality of increasing inflationary and obligatory costs. When the Governor vetoed the state support bill passed by the legislature, he made it clear that it would be revisited during budget negotiations. Well, we're ready to talk. It is crucial that the state make a good faith effort to maintain their support of SUNY such that the burden does not fall squarely on the shoulders of our students and our campuses.

"We support the renewal of a fair, equitable, and predictable tuition plan and are glad the Governor does too. Students and families must have the ability to predict their financial futures and the renewal of rational tuition does just that. It is critical, however, that the state pays their fair share, that tuition dollars stay on college campuses, that students are consulted, and that tuition is not raised to the maximum allowable threshold.

"We join the Governor in his vision to improve and expand SUNY's involvement with New York's economy. Helping more people be able to afford a higher education degree is the common sense step toward reaching that goal."

Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance Jr.

"I commend Governor Cuomo on his bold agenda for our state, and in particular, the priority he has placed on criminal justice initiatives that will benefit New Yorkers of all ages, backgrounds, and education levels. The future success of New York State is directly tied to that of its citizens, which does not—and must not—exclude those incarcerated at city and state prisons. Many of these individuals will eventually reenter the community and require every practical opportunity to lead safe, productive lives, which is why my Office recently partnered with the Governor's Office to fund a \$7.5 million initiative to offer educational programming at state prisons. In order to improve public safety and enhance fairness in criminal justice, constructive change in the way we address these issues is necessary to help individuals avoid—and more importantly, stay out of—our prison system. Thanks to Governor Cuomo, as well as elected officials and other key stakeholders across the state, today represents an important step in the right direction."

New York Republican Chairman Ed Cox

"Governor Cuomo's State of the State was chock full of overblown rhetoric and empty promises. He's proposed \$100 billion in new projects without any idea how he will pay for it. New York continues to have the highest taxes, highest energy costs, least business-friendly climate and most citizens leaving the state. Until the Governor gets serious about reforming New York, we will continue the exodus of jobs and people."

New York League of Conservation Voters President Marcia Bystryn

"Today's State of the State Speech and Executive Budget presentation builds on the Governor's bold announcements from last week. This is an exciting time for the environment in New York State. The Governor's speech made significant proposals aimed at our top priorities: fighting climate change, conserving land and water, and protecting public health.

"On climate, the budget includes \$32 million for climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Governor also pronounced that New York will become the international capital for clean and green energy. He is allocating \$15 million dollars to a clean energy job training program. SUNY will train workers for solar technology and installation toward the Governor's mandated goal of 50% renewable energy by 2030. He also pledged to phase out all coal plants from our energy mix in the next four years.

"The Governor is also taking major steps to conserve natural resources. \$125 million will go to municipalities to help them repair aging sewers and water mains, thus protecting our waterways from raw sewage. The Environmental Protection Fund will reach its highest level in history at \$300 million and support waterfront revitalization, forests, municipal parks, and farmland preservation across the state. We are thrilled to see more than half of the money for waterfront revitalization and municipal parks -- \$25 million -- is earmarked for urban and underserved communities throughout the state. The budget also includes money to address the nitrogen pollution problem on Long Island.

"Finally, we are also pleased to see the Governor addressing environmental issues as they

relate to public health. \$2 million will go to the Department of Environmental Conservation toward environmental health and the Child Safe Products Act was again included on his program agenda. The Governor will also increase funding for farmland protection by 25 percent.

"This is a big and ambitious agenda. We applaud the Governor for his leadership and the level of attention he gave to our top priorities today. Now the real work begins. We look forward to doing whatever is necessary this session to make sure these proposals are in the final budget and become state law. "

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

"Great things are happening in The Bronx, and Governor Cuomo's remarks today confirm that we are setting the bar for the entire state. Crime rates are dropping, businesses are growing and, thanks to the creation of the Bronx Employment Strike Force in 2014 and our efforts through the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation, we are putting people to work.

"The governor's commitment of \$55 million towards expanded workforce training for at-risk youth, as well as new tax cuts for small businesses, will only help our job creation efforts grow. We are grateful for that continued support.

"In his 'State of the State' today, Governor Cuomo outlined an ambitious agenda on multiple issues that concern our borough, our city and our state. From increasing our state's minimum wage, or expanding paid family leave, the governor has made a clear pitch to help strengthen families. With increased funding for CUNY and SUNY, a new tax credit for teachers and an \$800 million increase in universal pre-K programs, the governor is clearly focused on our public school system.

"No issue has captivated our city more than housing and homelessness, and the announcement of \$20 billion in new funding for permanent and supportive housing is certainly welcome. I look forward to working with officials at all levels to identify sites and projects that could benefit from this funding while creating much needed new units.

"Finally, I am encouraged by the governor's proposal to allow automatic voter registration at the DMV. Voter participation is the key component of civic health, and I have always supported initiatives that allow more New Yorkers to participate in our electoral process. If we do not participate, our voices are not heard."

Dr. Rick Timbs, executive director of the Statewide School Finance Consortium

"Unfortunately, the extremely brief overview of the Executive Budget proposal once again falls short — far short — in providing the financial support public education desperately needs. The proposed \$991 million in "new" state aid is over \$1.4 billion less than what the Regents thoughtfully recommended to essentially maintain the status quo for our neediest children and school districts. Bottom line, with well over \$4 billion in Foundation Aid still

owed to schools, the Executive Budget plan is clearly insufficient. We have much work to do over the next several weeks to help craft a final budget that is fair and sufficient."

High Achievement New York Executive Director Stephen Sigmund

"It's encouraging that the Governor made a commitment to strongly funding our schools and maintaining the highest education standards. We're pleased the Governor supported the recommendations of the Task Force which clearly committed to revised and improved standards based on the Common Core and creating better tests that help ensure a high-quality education for all students no matter where they come from."

Long Island Federation of Labor President John Durso

"The Governor's focus on vital infrastructure investments, especially the third track for the Long Island Railroad, as well as his commitment to raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, is a great benefit to working families and our regional economy."

Housing Works President and CEO Charles King

"The Governor's actions and words today underscore that the Blueprint delivered to him in April is not just a document that will sit on the shelf, but something that has already begun to live. Governor Cuomo vowed to lead the charge to combat homelessness in this state and today, he made good on that promise, expanding the state's investment in needed services and affordable housing."

CenterState CEO President Rob Simpson

"Today, Governor Cuomo outlined a series of ambitious proposals that have the potential to directly impact our region's businesses and residents, and move our state and local economy forward.

"His plan to ease the tax burden on small businesses including, reducing the net income tax rate from 6.5 percent to 4 percent, and enabling sole proprietors and agriculture businesses to subtract 15 percent of their income from tax calculations, will provide needed relief for some of our greatest job generators and support key sectors of our economy.

"His proposal to establish a NYS Certified High Quality Program mirrors Central New York's own vision to position the region as a leader in modern agriculture that can meet the rising global demands for food and food safety.

"This region has also made government modernization a priority and is proudly leading the state in its effort to reduce property tax burdens and create a more sustainable government structure. We applaud the Governor for his call to advance these efforts statewide.

"Furthermore critical investments for Upstate, including \$22 billion for roads and bridges over five years and \$250 million for water and sewer upgrades for local municipalities is welcome news for a communities like ours with aging infrastructure.

"Likewise the new effort to revitalize downtowns through his proposed \$100 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative will help reverse years of blight and transform our region's urban centers into vibrant and dynamic communities.

"Over five rounds of regional Economic Development Councils our region has created hundreds of jobs and leveraged significant private investment. We look forward to engaging with our local community to drive new opportunities and investments through the program's sixth round.

"I look forward to reviewing these proposals and the budget in greater detail. It is our hope that the legislature will work with the Governor to implement these measures to continue the positive momentum that is creating economic opportunity across our region and state."

New York State United Teachers

"The governor's State of the State message is a starting point that sets a positive tone for public education. We appreciate the respect voiced for educators and the hard work they do every day on behalf of New York's students. We are committed to having the constructive conversations needed to advance public education.

"The governor's K-12 state aid proposal begins the essential discussions that must take place about what's needed to provide every student with a quality public education in the wake of the tax cap. The education tax credit proposal remains problematic. And, of course, we must press to fully fund SUNY, CUNY and the community colleges.

"As we have the opportunity to review details in the days ahead, we look forward to working constructively with the Legislature and the governor to advance public education, from pre-school through post-graduate."

Hunger Solutions New York Executive Director Linda Bopp

"Hunger Solutions New York applauds the governor's plan. We believe that the cities named in the initiative will quickly identify hunger as a top priority and recommend expanded nutrition outreach and education efforts to enroll more people in SNAP and other nutrition assistance programs."

Middletown Mayor Joseph DeStefano

"The REDC has had such a significant impact on the City of Middletown. A sixth round of completion will continue this important economic development tool available to local governments across New York. Governor Cuomo has focused on Upstate New York like no other governor and we are now reaping the rewards of his forward thinking proposals."

Syracuse Mayor Stephanie Miner

"Today, I thank Governor Cuomo for the substantive policy proposals he included in the State of the State address. The issues he covered, including additional investment in infrastructure, increasing MWBE contracting goals, paid family leave, and reform to ethics

and elections, are important to the people of the City of Syracuse. The Governor was able to bring these important issues—many that I have long advocated for—to the forefront of our state’s conversation today. I look forward to hearing more details on these proposals throughout the budget process and will be pleased to work with the Governor and Legislature to see they are enacted.”