

March 2003

Dear {Personalized}:

Thank you for expressing your concerns about this year's budget. It's no secret that New York faces a massive budget crisis. I agree that eliminating jobs and raising taxes are not ideal solutions.

We all must work together to make the right choices. And a budget like Governor Pataki's that ***jeopardizes 105,000 jobs and imposes \$5 billion in hidden taxes is the wrong choice***. The governor refuses to acknowledge that the reality of his budget is 180 degrees from his rhetoric that there are no "job-killing" taxes in his budget.

Largest education cut in history could cost thousands of jobs and force property taxes to soar

By proposing the largest cut to education in New York's history — a whopping \$1.24 billion cut to elementary and secondary schools, and a nearly \$703 million cut to SUNY and CUNY funding — the governor could put 57,000 people out of work. His cuts combined with freezing the School Tax Relief (STAR) program would send property taxes skyrocketing nearly 20 percent across the state. How can the governor claim that a 20 percent increase in school taxes is not a job-killing tax cut? He can't.

Governor's health care cuts will mean fewer caregivers and higher costs

Hospitals and health care services are among the top employers in virtually every county in New York. But the governor's budget would also slash Medicaid and other health care services by \$2 billion, potentially resulting in 48,000 lost jobs in health care and related industries and a decline of quality care. He also wants to impose new taxes on hospitals and health care providers — a cost that will surely be passed on to employers and consumers in the form of higher health care costs and insurance premiums.

Creating jobs requires a commitment to the right choices — not killing programs that work

In fact, instead of balancing these cuts with a plan to stimulate the economy, the governor proposed the opposite. His original budget would have killed Empire Zones — the Assembly-initiated program designed to cut costs for businesses and create jobs. Although his administration once hailed it as the single most effective economic development program in the country, the governor proposed forcing local governments to pay 50 percent of the cost to run Empire Zones, while cutting over \$3.5 million to local zone administrators. This would have eradicated countless jobs and discouraged new businesses from coming to New York.

The Assembly has convinced the governor that forcing localities to pay half the cost of the program was the wrong choice. And while working families should be pleased the governor backed away from this devastating cut, he did not restore the money for administering the program — leaving lingering questions as to his long-term commitment to the program and possibly undermine its viability.

I share your concern about the present state of our economy. New York ranks 40th in the nation for job-growth under the governor's failed economic development policies; New York's economy has suffered long before the horrific September 11th terrorist attacks. While this tragedy did impact our economy, it was not responsible for the eight-year economic downward spiral that the state experienced under the governor's leadership. The governor's policies failed to capitalize on the longest economic expansion in our nation's history. If employment in New York state had grown under Governor Pataki at the same rate as the nation, *289,000 additional jobs would have been created*. Instead, the governor's policies have left us nearly last in the nation in job growth.

Now the governor has put forward a proposed state budget that will put New York even further behind the rest of the country in job growth.

The governor's proposal makes the wrong choices. The upcoming budget negotiations will prove to be an arduous process for everyone, but I am dedicated to making the right choices for New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

Assemblymember
Member of the Assembly