

STATE ISSUES

- POLICY STATEMENT -

The health and vitality of state and local economies continue to be a top priority.

Local governments are finding it necessary to pay for “unfunded mandates” by passing the costs on to local citizens. Specifically, local property owners are seeing continuing increases in their school and property taxes. These increased taxes are a particular hardship for rural landowners, particularly farmers. Farmers are major landowners who rely on their land to generate their livelihood while they pay a disproportionate share of property tax. We therefore support legislation that would lessen the financial burden imposed by unfunded, mandated programs affecting local and rural citizens.

The agricultural industry makes vital contributions to the quality of life in our State by creating jobs, generating revenue, producing safe and wholesome products, and allowing us to sustain open spaces and beautiful rural landscapes. New York State continues to maintain approximately one-quarter of the total land area in this great State for agriculture.

We encourage the research and development of safe, economical, and environmentally friendly alternative energy sources. We support improving recycling practices and encourage all citizens to do their part to protect our environment.

Tax relief is essential to the revitalization of rural communities. We support legislation that addresses this issue.

On time passage of the annual New York State budget is very important. We support a timely annual New York State Budget.

The power of eminent domain should be used only for public projects, rather than as recently expanded by the Supreme Court, to include the taking of property for private economic development.

It is important that local communities be provided with information regarding sexual offenders living there, to be able to better protect those who might be at risk.

We favor the election of our judges and the retention of our town and village justice courts.

We ask that more programs be set up to educate drivers on dangerous distracting activities while driving, through Public Service Announcements and Driver Education classes.

October 2009

ADVERTISING

PUBLICATION OF LEGAL NOTICES IN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

We request the NYS Legislature and the Governor to amend the General Construction Law to allow newspapers, which do not charge for the paper, but with an established and large local circulation, to be considered as newspapers so that local governments are allowed to place legal notices in these local publications which may reach a larger audience and/or be less expensive to publish. (2007)

ALCOHOL/TOBACCO

ALCOHOL-RELATED DEATH SCENE MARKERS

We oppose the placement of signs at the location of alcohol-related accidents causing fatalities and to use these state funds to educate the public of the dangers of alcohol and other drugs. (2009)

ALCOHOL BEVERAGE ADVERTISING

We support legislation for alcoholic beverage advertising to be curtailed with special sensitivity given to its effect on our youth. (2009)

DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED (DWI)/BOATING WHILE INTOXICATED (BWI)

We support legislation that would allow the courts to consider information of prior convictions of Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) and Boating While Intoxicated (BWI) against the individual during sentencing. (2007)

BUSINESS/INDUSTRY

NEEDED CAPTIAL FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

We support legislation that could help small businesses remain in New York State. (2009)

FREEDOM OF BRAND CHOICE

We oppose any practices by any company that requires exclusivity to carry their product except in the case of a legal franchise agreement. (2009)

SALE OF MAILING LISTS

We support privacy legislation and do-not-call list laws. (2009)

EMPIRE ZONES

We call upon State legislators to enact laws that would carefully examine all companies receiving tax credits and decertify undeserving recipients of Empire Zone tax breaks and, further, that the State enact legislation that requires administrators of Empire Zones to audit and seek repayment of tax credits where obligations have not been met. (2007)

PREVAILING WAGE RATES

We support legislation that would eliminate the mandated prevailing wage rates in New York State and allow municipalities and school districts to enter into competitive bids for both wage rates and materials. (2005)

CEMETERIES

STATE VETERANS' CEMETERY

We support the conversion of the John White Memorial Game Farm into a New York State Veterans' Cemetery and would ask the New York State Assembly and Senate to pass legislation at its earliest possible convenience, which would allow State funds to be put toward such a use and that the Governor would sign this legislation into law. (2006)

YEAR-ROUND BURIAL REQUIREMENTS

We oppose any legislation that mandates year-round burial be available at all cemeteries, leaving the practice of providing such service optional to each cemetery association. (2005)

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

RESTRICTION ON ELEPHANTS

We support allowing elephant rides at fairs and carnivals and ask the Department of Environmental Conservation to reconsider their ruling prohibiting elephant rides at fairs and carnivals. (2008)

DISABILITIES

ENFORCEMENT OF HANDICAPPED (SPECIAL NEEDS) PARKING

We support increased police enforcement of existing laws and legislation that would tighten laws concerning illegal uses of handicapped/special needs parking permits. (2005)

DRIVING HAZARDS

TEXT MESSAGING

We support proposed legislation which will make text messaging while driving illegal and that more educational programs be set up to address the hazards of distractive activities while driving. (2008)

CELL PHONE USE WHILE DRIVING

We support more stringent enforcement of the law forbidding the use of hand held phones while driving. (2007)

ELECTIONS, ELECTION PROCEDURES

REQUIREMENT OF RESIDENCY

We support a requirement of residency of five (5) years in New York State preceding election of candidates for U.S. House of Representatives or U.S. Senate. (2009)

INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM PROCEDURES

We are opposed to any Initiative and Referendum proposals. (2008)

FILLING A VACANCY IN THE STATE OFFICE OF COMPTROLLER OR ATTORNEY GENERAL

We support legislation to amend the New York State Constitution (Article V, Section 1) to stipulate that if a vacancy should occur in the offices of either the State Comptroller or Attorney General during their four-year term, the Governor shall make an interim appointment with such person only serving in the office until the very next general election, when they could choose to serve out the remainder of the term, thus giving back to the electorate the right to choose statewide public officials. (2007)

ENERGY

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY EXECUTIVE ORDER

We support Governor George Pataki's executive order dated 11/21/05 requiring 5% of heating fuels used in state buildings to be bio-fuels by the year 2012. (2006)

WIND POWER AS ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCE

We encourage research into the possibility of using wind power as an alternative energy source where feasible. (2005)

FIREARMS

SALE OF FIREARMS

We discourage lawsuits being brought against the legal manufacturing, distribution and sale of firearms. (2006)

GAMBLING/LOTTERY

CASINO GAMBLING

We oppose casino gambling in New York State. (2006)

VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

We oppose the establishment of video lottery terminal machines at racetracks or any other site in New York State. (2006)

GOVERNMENT - LOCAL & STATE

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR IN NYS CONSTITUTION

We support current legislation that would allow a Governor to appoint a Lieutenant Governor that would be approved by both houses of the State Legislature, create a mechanism to allow the Lieutenant Governor to assume the powers of a Governor when he or she is unable to discharge his or her responsibilities, and establish that a Governor remains a Governor even when absent from the state. (2009, 2008)

INSURANCE

DOG OWNER LIABILITY INSURANCE

We oppose the requirement of mandatory liability insurance for all dog owners in New York State. (2009)

INTERNET

INTERNET PROTECTION

We support legislation, which would create the Internet Protection Act, that would not only require more adequate punishment for those that distribute sexually explicit materials, but also requires compliance by the public libraries and make financial assistance available to the libraries for the expense incurred by providing the segregated terminals. (2007)

LAW ENFORCEMENT/POLICE

USE OF GLOBAL POSITIONING TRACKING SYSTEMS (GPS)

We support legislation that would require police agencies to obtain a justified warrant before being allowed to attach GPS tracking devices to vehicles, thus preventing police from arbitrarily using them without cause.

LAWS/REGULATIONS/ COURT SYSTEM

CRIMINAL VS. VICTIM LAWSUITS

We support legislation that would prevent a criminal from bringing a civil lawsuit against a victim or a concerned citizen who might injure that criminal while defending themselves or trying to prevent a criminal act. (2009)

VICTIM'S RIGHTS IN THE NEWS MEDIA

We endorse the protection of victims from the undue publicity regarding the nature of the crime committed against them, including the publication of their name. (2009)

STRENGTHENING HOME RULE

We call upon our state leaders to preserve and strengthen home rule and strongly oppose any state initiative to eliminate or weaken our state's long-standing tradition of home rule and local government authority. (2008)

ROLE OF ENERGY GENERATION FACILITIES

We call for legislation to develop new laws and regulations that will preserve local authority over the siting of Wind Energy Facilities (WEFs) and will allow local representation on the NYS Board of Electric Generation Siting (Siting Board). (2008)

TWO-YEAR CYCLE FOR BILLS IN LEGISLATURE

We support legislation that would create a two-year cycle for bills within the NYS Legislature which would allow a bill passed in one house one year to be considered by the other house the succeeding year without necessitating discussion and repeat approval by the original house in the same year, thereby reducing the current inefficiency of time by the State Legislature and wasted money expended by state government. (2008)

AMENDMENT TO NYS LAWS RELATED TO TIMBER MANAGEMENT AND TIMBER THEFT

We favor legislation amending various laws pertaining to timber theft and forest management, further that the Commissioner of Department of Environmental Conservation, in consultation with the NYS Forest Practice Board, review and comment on local laws and regulations that may unreasonably restrict best management forestry practices. (2008)

RETENTION OF LOCAL COURTS/ELECTION OF JUDGES

We urge our State Legislature to retain our local town and village courts, and to have all of our judges elected by the people whom they serve. (2007)

LEGISLATIVE REFORM

NEW YORK STATE REFORM

We support legislation that would have meaningful reform for our state government addressing the following:

1. If the legislative body is not meeting as prescribed by our constitution, that the Governor and Comptroller have the authority to withhold all salaries from that body until such time that they resume their deliberations.
2. All legislative sessions to be open to the public.
3. The budget process be open and not finalized behind closed doors by those in power.

(2009)

LICENSING/REGISTRATIONS/FEEES

CAREGIVING AND CHILD DAY CARE LICENSING

We support stricter enforcement of rules in licensing operator and caregivers of child day care centers. (2009)

DRIVERS' LICENSES FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

We oppose the issuance of drivers' licenses to illegal aliens. (2007)

MONTH-LONG VALIDITY OF VEHICLE INSPECTIONS

We support legislation that would maintain the current month-long validity of vehicle inspection stickers. (2006)

PLACEMENT OF VEHICLE REGISTRATION STICKERS

We urge that the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles investigate the possible movement of vehicle registration stickers to a more accessible position. (2006)

POLICE ACCIDENT REPORT FEE REFORM

We seek legislation at the State and Federal levels which would amend the Public Officers Law (Section 66-a), and the Freedom of Information Law which would remove any such fees now required to receive accident reports. (2006)

LIFE SENTENCE

LIFE SENTENCE WITHOUT PAROLE FOR CONVICTED KILLERS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

We support legislation for life sentence without parole for convicted killers of law enforcement officers in New York State, as the preferred deterrent for such heinous crimes. (2007)

MINORS

ORDERS OF PROTECTION

We support legislation that would permit youth over the age of 12 to petition for Orders of Protection on their own behalf, even if their abuser is a minor as well. (2009)

CHILD PROTECTION

We support legislation which establishes the attempt of luring or enticing a child a Class D felony; provided that the creation of this separate crime shall not preclude, if the evidence so

warrants, an indictment and conviction for attempted kidnapping, and that such legislation would expand the law so that the law would apply to cover a situation where an investigator poses as a minor in a sting operation. (2007)

GRANDPARENTS GUARDIANSHIP ACT

We support the Grandparents Guardianship Act or similar legislation that would provide that all grandparents shall receive notice of any proceedings involving a grandchild and a non-parent party, including foster care proceedings and adoptions, and upon the removal of a child from a parent's home by Child Protective Services, all grandparents shall be notified and informed of the opportunity to become a foster parent. It also would provide that any grandparent who does not seek to become foster parents must sign such a waiver. (2006)

MISCELLANEOUS

ENGLISH AS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF NEW YORK STATE

We support the designation of English as our official language. (2008)

PREDATORY LENDING

We support legislation that will provide protection against predatory lending practices. (2006)

SUNY MORRISVILLE E4NY PROJECT

We support SUNY Morrisville's E4NY bio-diesel fuel project for supplying heat and power for its benefit in energy, education, economic development and environmental impact. (2006)

PROPERTY OWNERS' RIGHTS

LIMITATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY TO UTILIZE EMINENT DOMAIN

We support creation of a temporary commission that would include, but not be limited to, representatives of NYS Grange, Farm Bureau and the Property Rights Foundation of America to study New York State Eminent Domain Law. (2006)

We support legislation that would limit the use of eminent domain power to public projects. (2005)

RECREATION/SPORTS

SNOWMOBILES IN THE ADIRONDACK PARK

We oppose the closing of snowmobile trails in the Adirondack State Park. (2009)

BICYCLE HELMETS

We support changes in the laws governing bicycling to require all cyclists to wear a safety helmet while riding a bicycle. (2009)

RECYCLING

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We seek legislation to support all counties in NYS in developing and promoting recycling solutions such as placement of receptacles, recycling pickup, and recycling drop off centers consistent with county and municipal waste management practices; that New York State promote citizen awareness of the wide range of materials that can be recycled; and that such legislation should provide for collaboration between local governments, recycling partners, and consumers to develop and promote flexible local solutions to make recycling successful. (2009)

SAFETY/PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

We oppose the requirement of the installation of driver monitoring devices on school buses, but instead support the U.S. Department of Transportation requirement for random drug and alcohol testing to be conducted from time to time. (2009)

SHOULDER HARNESSSES IN SCHOOL BUSES

We oppose the installation of shoulder harnesses in full-size school buses in New York State. (2009)

WEARING REFLECTIVE GEAR DURING POOR VISIBILITY

We support the use of reflective gear for all police and emergency personnel/responders in all situations that require them to work during periods of poor visibility. (2007)

REQUIRED BUILDING NUMBERING

We encourage that all residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and recreational buildings in New York State prominently display four-inch **reflective** numbers on the structure. Numbers shall be visible from the road or at the access point of the property and on the structure, if it is not visible from the road. (2006)

HOTEL & MOTEL SAFETY

We promote and encourage that all motel and hotel rooms be installed with safety grab bars in bathrooms. (2006)

SEXUAL OFFENSES

LEVEL II AND III SEXUAL OFFENDERS

We support requiring all Level II and III sexual offenders to wear a lifetime monitoring device. (2006)

SPORTS/SPORTING ACTIVITIES

NEW YORK STATE SPORTSMEN

We support legislation that provides for continual sportsmen's rights and encourages youth to participate in outdoor sporting activities with proper adult supervision. (2005)

STATE BUDGET

LATE STATE BUDGET

We recommend that if the New York State Budget is not passed by April 1, the previous year's budget be continued in effect for another year, so that school districts and local governments have a tax rate for reference. (2006)

STATE FAIR

LIGHTING

We recommend that the State Fair provide lights at the exits so the State Police can be seen more easily from a distance away, and that these lights be used on any occasion the State Fairgrounds are used when people have to cross State Fair Boulevard to the parking lots. (2009)

SQUARE DANCING

We request the NYS Fair Board keep square dancing as an activity at the NYS Fair; that the NYS Fair Board publicize the date, time, location, etc. that square dance clubs are scheduled to perform so the public can enjoy this activity; and that the NYS Fair Board provide ample floor space so square dance clubs can perform their routines safely. (2009)

STATE PROGRAMS/FUNDING, **MANDATES**

MANDATE RELIEF

We call upon the Governor and NYS Legislature to enact comprehensive mandate relief legislation that would take into consideration the following among other relief measures:

1. inventory existing mandates
2. fully fund all future mandates (2008)

REGULATIONS BY STATE AGENCIES

We urge that state agencies follow the rule adoption set forth in the Governor's Office of Regulatory Reform. All agencies who receive funding from the New York State Budget must file a notice of adoption for publication in the State Register. The notice of adoption must contain a number of items of procedural information, the full text of the adopted rule, any revised regulatory impact statement, regulatory flexibility analysis for small businesses and rural area flexibility analysis, or a summary of any such document that exceeds 2000 words. It must also file the notice of adoption with this Office, the Governor and specified legislators. (2008)

RULES & REGULATIONS

We urge the NYS Legislature to provide for adequate review and approval by the legislature of all rules and regulations which place burdens and obligations on the people, and recommend that the legislature review and limit the exercise of judicial power by administrative agencies and authorities, and provide for adequate review of the courts. (2008)

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

We support immediate action to ensure that the Industrial Development Funds be used only for small or new businesses for which they were originally intended. (2008)

UNFUNDED MANDATES

We urge the Governor and State Legislators to help minimize county financial burdens by: (1) passing the state budget on time (2) trimming government costs (3) eliminating unfunded mandates. (2008)

DANGEROUS DRIVING HABITS

We ask that more programs be set up to educate drivers on dangerous distracting activities while driving by using Public Service announcements and Driver Education classes. (2007)

FUNDING OF SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

We oppose the contribution of state money to special interest groups which engage in illegal activities. (2006)

TRANSPORTATION/HIGHWAYS/ VEHICLES

SPEED LIMIT FOR SCHOOL BUSES

We support allowing school buses to travel up to the posted speed limit on all highways in New York State as opposed to the Department of Education regulation which limits school buses to a maximum of 55 mph, an unsafe speed on major expressways. (2009)

BRUSH OBSTRUCTIONS ON RURAL ROADS

We favor a requirement that all highway departments of the State of New York keep brush obstructions trimmed to give a clear view of the crossroads. (2009)

CONSOLIDATED HIGHWAY PROGRAM (CHIP) FUNDS

We request our State Government to return all road use funds to a dedicated highway fund for the repair of roads and bridges only, to eliminate the need of property or other taxes to replace these CHIP funds. (2009)

NYS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION REGULATIONS RELATED TO TRUCKS 45 FEET OR LONGER

We favor reducing fuel taxes for trucks 45 feet or longer paid on the Interstate Highway System in New York State to help alleviate truck traffic on non-interstate roads and support the reduction of Interstate tolls in New York State to trucks 45 feet or longer to provide incentives for truck drivers to travel the Interstate Highway System. (2008)

DESIGNATED TRUCK ROUTE FOR LANDFILL WASTE

We support passage of a Designated Highway Route for trucks transporting solid waste to the Seneca Landfill. (2008)

HIGHWAY REFLECTORS

We suggest that the various Departments of Transportation consider adding reflectors to the center lines of highways. (2007)

SPEED LIMITS ON TOWN ROADS

We urge the State Legislature to extend to all towns the option, through adoption of a local law, the responsibility and authority to set speed limits on town roads within their respective jurisdictions, within the limits as defined in Sect. 1662 of the Vehicle and Traffic Law, so long as those roads have been functionally classified by the Department of Transportation as local roads. (2007, 2006)

HORSE TRAVEL SAFETY

We encourage the use of reflective tape on the harness and bridle of the horses traveling on public highways after sunset. (2006)

EFFICIENT HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

We call upon the Governor and State Legislature to continue their support of the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) and to explore every way possible to increase highway aid and, further, to enact appropriate enabling authority for Local Road Classification as recommended by the NYS Local Road Classification Force which will permit local governments to rationally reduce to more appropriate levels, the costs of maintenance and repair of such low volume roads. (2006)

FOG LINES/CENTER STRIPPING

We request that towns paint fog lines and center stripping on their roads where feasible. (2006)

EXIT NUMBERS –INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS

We urge that New York State change its exit marking system on Interstate roads so that the exit numbers are the same as mileage markers. (2006)

HEADLIGHTS “ON”

We urge that all motor vehicles be required to have headlights “on” whenever in operation. (2006)

EMERGENCY LIGHTS

We support legislation that requires all drivers to yield to volunteer firemen and ambulance personnel when displaying blue or green lights in emergency situations. (2006)

TRAFFIC SIGNS AND SIGNALS

We support action to promote maintenance of road signs at all times. (2006)

LOCATION OF “NO TURN ON RED” SIGNS

We support the consistency in the placement of “no right turn on red” signs being next to the traffic light at all intersections deemed too dangerous for a right turn on a red light. (2007, 2006)

SLOW-MOVING VEHICLE EMBLEMS

We urge enforcement of the Vehicle and Traffic Laws regarding misuse of the slow-moving vehicle emblem. (2005)

UTILITIES

NORTH COUNTRY LAND SWAP

We support the passage of Proposal #1 on Election Day, November 3, 2009, which would authorize New York State to convey up to six acres of forestry preserve to National Grid in return for at least 10 acres of forested land to be incorporated into the forest preserve for the purpose of ensuring a more dependable electric power supply to the North Country while preserving lands with unique resources; and that we also support increased public announcements to inform the voters of the importance of their support in passage of Proposal #1 on Election Day, Nov. 3, 2009. (2009)

OPPOSITION TO THE NEW YORK REGIONAL INTERCONNECT

We oppose the NYRI (New York Regional Interconnect, a privately owned corporation) proposal that would construct a power transmission corridor and the use of Eminent Domain for its creation. (2007, 2006)

ELECTRIC CORRIDOR

We support legislation that would require public hearings for proposed electric corridors be held in the area affected by the proposed project. (2007)

UTILITY COSTS FOR VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS

We request that the Public Service Commission of New York State direct electric utility providers to set rates for service for volunteer fire departments equal to the lowest rate for all categories of accounts they serve. (2006)

ELECTRIC AND GAS REGULATION

We support regulation of electric and gas companies. (2006)

WILDLIFE/ HUNTING & FISHING

AGE RESTRICTION FOR HUNTERS

We oppose any changes to New York State Environmental Conservation Laws raising the current minimum ages for obtaining NYS hunting licenses. (2009)

INTRODUCTION OF WILDLIFE

We urge our State Legislature to be diligent about protecting our people, livestock and crops from danger and that no wild animals be introduced into New York State without prior legal notice to the public and prior consultation with and the consent of the county legislatures in the

areas affected, and that just compensation be provided to land owners whose property is set aside as a habitat for any endangered species. (2007)

RIGHT TO HUNT, FISH, AND TRAP

We support the model language provided by the National Rifle Association-Institute for Legislative Action be followed for a State Constitutional amendment that would guarantee the right of legal hunting in New York State – “The people have a right to hunt, fish, trap, and harvest game, subject to reasonable regulations. Consistent with the public trust to conserve birds, fish, game and wildlife, traditional methods may be used to take non-threatened species traditionally pursued. Public hunting, fishing and trapping shall be the preferred means of managing and controlling non-threatened wildlife. Nothing in this amendment shall be construed to modify any provision of common law or statutes relating to trespass, eminent domain, or any other property rights.” (2007)

CORMORANT POPULATION CONTROL

We strongly support the efforts of the Cormorant Control Working Group, the NYS DEC and the Province of Ontario on their collaborative effort to control cormorants on the St. Lawrence River and Black Lake and receive immediate assistance in cormorant control to protect and maintain its current fishing and tourism economy. (2006)

POISONOUS SNAKES AND PREDATORY ANIMALS

We support a ban on the introduction and/or release of any poisonous snakes or predatory animals in New York State. (2006)

We recommend that the Department of Environmental Conservation post public lands where there is an infestation of poisonous snakes. (2006)