

TAXATION & FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

- POLICY STATEMENT -

To achieve a balanced budget, either government spending must be reduced or more tax dollars must be raised. The Grange supports a prudent fiscal policy by curtailing expenditures in several areas. The growth of the national debt must be stopped.

Economic growth can be encouraged by wise government spending. Local governments are being strangled by the weight of mandates. These mandates must be funded by the government of origin. Dedicated funds must be used solely for the purpose for which they were created.

Alternative tax sources must be more equitable, easier to collect and not be included in the present tax policy to provide for additional expenditures. The borrowing of money to meet budgeting needs is not acceptable. Future generations should not be burdened with the expenditures of today.

Timely passage of the New York State Budget is a necessity, along with eliminating the 3-person control (Governor, Senate Majority Leader and Assembly Speaker) of budget development and timing. The New York State Grange strongly supports reform efforts to correct this situation.

October 2009

AGRICULTURE

PROPOSED MILK TAX

We oppose any taxes per hundred pounds of milk for milk producers. (2006)

FARM AND AGRICULTURAL LAND VALUATION PROJECT

We urge the New York State Legislature to provide the funding necessary for the completion of a real property valuation of agricultural and rural parcels as requested from Cornell University and upon the completion of the agricultural and rural land valuations the New York State Office of Real Property Services shall adopt the valuation methodology and make it part of the Assessor's Manual. (2006)

BANKS AND SAVINGS, LOAN ASSOCIATIONS

MUNICIPAL DEPOSITS IN CREDIT UNIONS AND THRIFT INSTITUTIONS

We request the State Legislature to enact legislation that amends all applicable state laws to allow local governments to deposit public funds in credit unions, savings banks and savings and loan associations. (2006)

BOTTLE DEPOSITS

UNCLAIMED BOTTLE DEPOSIT MONEY

We support legislative action to make sure that the unclaimed bottle deposit money (when available) is dedicated only to help fund environmental programs (cleanup, educational outreach programs and needed coordinators) all necessary to keep us in compliance with state mandates that each community must have an active solid waste and recycling program with a high percentage of resident participation. (2009)

EXPANDED BOTTLE BILL

We support a legislative change that would approve a five-cent deposit on all beverage bottles and cans including wine, liquor, water, sports drinks, juice and soda, to further help keep our highways and roadsides clean. (2007, 2005)

BUSINESS/INDUSTRY

JOB OUTSOURCING

We support tax break incentives for only those companies who keep all jobs in the United States by keeping all of their production business physically in the United States, further that a symmetrical tariff of 27.5% be imposed on all Chinese products and remove sanctions once China has moved to a market-based currency. (2009)

SMALL BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2008

We support proposed legislation in the New York State Assembly that would enact the Small Business Improvement Act of 2008 by establishing an internet list of regulatory reform and economic development projects. (2008)

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (IDAs)

We support legislation which would merge several Industrial Development Agencies (IDA's) and make other reforms to curb IDA misuses. (2007)

We support legislation that limits the eligibility to one time assistance by IDAs. (2006)

NEW YORK STATE POPULATION OUTFLOW

We urge our elected officials to take into consideration the need to lower the taxes in New York State that cause vibrant industries to leave the state for areas that present a better financial return because of lower taxing demands. (2005)

COMPENSATION/WAGES

RETRO-ACTIVE VETERANS COMPENSATION

We support legislation requiring the Department of Veteran Affairs to pay the widow/widowers or estates of Veterans, any retro-active disability benefits should the Veteran die before the submitted claim is processed. (2008)

CREDIT CARDS

INTEREST RATES

We support legislation that would amend the Credit Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009 by setting a maximum interest rate for all credit cards and by fining those who issue credit cards and attempt to make up possible losses by imposing fees, higher interest rates or other charges on responsible card holders who pay their entire balance in full each month. (2009)

UNSOLICITED CREDIT CARDS

We ask that credit card companies be prohibited from sending unsolicited credit cards. (2007)

FUEL/GASOLINE

GAS TAX HIKE

We support maintaining the current New York State cap on gasoline sales taxes. (2008)

REDUCTION OF GASOLINE TAX

We urge the New York State Legislature to enact a law reducing the gasoline tax to lower the overall cost of a gallon of gasoline. (2005)

HOME HEATING FUELS TAX

We urge the repeal of the New York State sales tax on home heating fuels. (2005)

HEALTH CARE

TAXES ON HOSPITALS AND NURSING HOMES IN NEW YORK STATE

We oppose any new taxes on hospitals and nursing homes. (2009)

HIGHWAYS/INTERSTATES

TOLLS ON INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS

We oppose the imposition of tolls on interstate highways. (2009)

ROAD FUEL TAX

We recommend the passing of legislation that would establish a dedicated fund for Road Fuel Taxes, and that this dedicated fund be used for New York State bridge and road repairs. (2008)

INCREASED TOLLS AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE NYS THRUWAY

We oppose a second consecutive year of increasing toll rates for the NYS Thruway in 2009 and 2010. (2008)

IMPROVING LOCAL TOWN ROADS

We seek legislative action to increase highway funding to assist town governments in providing adequate rural roads. (2007)

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR HIGHWAY

We urge that appropriate parties become aware of the study and the impact of the Northeast Corridor Highway (from Watertown to the state of Maine) on northern New York State. (2005)

LICENSE PLATES

NEW PLATES

We support efforts to stop or delay the implementation of mandatory new license plate purchases. (2009)

LOCAL COURTS & GOVERNMENT/SCHOOL DISTRICTS

REPEAL OF WICKS LAW FOR MUNICIPALITIES AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

We seek legislation to repeal the Wicks Law for all municipalities and school districts. (2007)

INCREASE IN JUSTICE COURT FUNDING

We seek legislative action to revise General Municipal Law 99-1 that would increase reimbursement fees to Towns and Villages to assist local taxpayers in funding justice court operational expenses. (2007)

MANDATE RELIEF

We call upon the Governor and State Legislature to repeal costly unfunded mandates on local government, including: 1) raising the project cost thresholds before WICKS would be applicable; 2) reform prevailing wage; and 3) including the ability to pay, without raising taxes, as a priority consideration for binding arbitration panels. (2006)

MOTOR VEHICLES

MOTOR VEHICLE ENFORCEMENT FEES

We support the permanent extension of the \$5 Motor Vehicle Law Enforcement Fee. (2008)

PENSION/RETIREMENT PLANS

NYS PENSION RETIREMENT AGE

We support leaving the retirement age at 55, for employees covered under the New York State Retirement System, having 10 years of service. (2009)

PENSIONS FOR CONVICTED FELONS

We urge the passage of legislation that would oversee a change in pension rules and other benefits pertaining to members of Congress who have been convicted of felonies. (2007)

FEDERAL PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTEE

We support legislative action to allow the shift of private pension responsibility to the Federal Pension Benefit Guarantee Plan only when the retirees are affected by a total closing of the business, instead of just filing bankruptcy and then continuing with business as usual. (2005)

PERSONAL INJURY AWARDS

CAP ON NON-ECONOMIC DAMAGES

We support legislative action, which would establish a \$500,000 cap on non-economic damages (and suffering awards) in all personal injury cases, except in cases of willful, wanton or gross negligence. (2007)

PERSONAL TAXES/INCOME

FIREMAN AND VOLUNTEER TAX DEDUCTION

We support legislative action that would make the volunteer firemen and medical emergency personnel deduction a line item deduction of no less than \$500, in place of an itemized deduction. (2007)

EXEMPTION CONSIDERATIONS FOR EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

We request the State Legislature to establish additional incentives for emergency service volunteers (firemen and rescue squads), such as greater levels of reduced property tax assessments. (2007)

IRS PLANS

We oppose any sale of information from individual tax returns to any agency or individual. (2006)

LIVING WAGE

We favor legislation that would establish a living wage above the poverty level for all eligible employees working on federal contracts. (2006)

TAXATION OF INVESTMENT INCOME

We are supportive of the proposed legislation to exempt the first \$500 or greater of interest and dividend income from state income taxes to encourage savings through investments and to help protect retirement income from depreciation through inflation. (2006)

DEATH TAX REPEAL PERMANENCY ACT OF 2005

We urge the U.S. Congress to pass the Death Tax Repeal Permanency Act of 2005 as soon as possible. (2005)

MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

We urge our Congressional representatives to reintroduce legislation which would repeal the two income family tax penalty. (2005)

PROPERTY TAXES

PRESERVATION OF LOCAL TAXATION ON CERTAIN LANDS OWNED BY NEW YORK STATE

We support the present authority for taxation of certain state lands and urge the State Legislature to develop a uniform policy for the taxation of certain state lands used for private use. (2008)

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

We oppose the passage of legislation for property tax reform that would take away property tax exemptions from non-profit organizations, such as religious orders and land trusts etc. unless they can prove that the property is used primarily as part of their core mission. (2008)

REFORM FOR CONDOMINIUM ASSESSMENTS

We seek legislative action to repeal the Real Property Law, Section 339-y to provide equal treatment for all residential housing. (2007)

WORKING FARMLAND TAX CREDIT

We support legislative efforts to create Working Farmland Tax Credit on land enrolled in certified agricultural districts, in exchange for an 8-year deed encumbrance to prevent non-farm development. (2007)

FUNDING DISTRIBUTIONS FROM THE STAR EXEMPTION PROGRAM

We support the examination of funding distribution to schools for the STAR Exemption Program so that equal distribution is given to upstate schools that are more susceptible to economic factors than are more affluent areas. (2005)

SOCIAL SECURITY

SOCIAL SECURITY LOCKBOX LAW

We support legislation that would fully protect and strengthen the Social Security Trust Fund. (2006)

DOUBLE TAX ON SOCIAL SECURITY AND PENSION FUNDS

We seek federal legislation that makes all Social Security benefits tax exempt when paid during retirement. (2006)

PRIVATE SOCIAL SECURITY ACCOUNTS

We strongly oppose directing any monies from the Social Security System into private accounts or the stock market. (2007, 2005)

INSURING PRIVATE SOCIAL SECURITY ACCOUNTS

If private Social Security accounts are implemented, we strongly favor the Federal Government insuring the private accounts, in an effort to prevent fraud and misuse by private agencies. (2005)

SOCIAL SECURITY STABILIZATION

We support the elimination of the Social Security Tax Cap on wages above \$90,000 without changing benefits. (2005)

STAR REBATE PROGRAM

CONTINUATION OF PROGRAM

We support inclusion of the STAR Rebate Program in future budgets. (2009)

S OR C CORPORATIONS

We support the enactment of legislation which would extend the STAR Exemption to farms owned by S or C corporations or partnerships, provided that a shareholder or partner has his primary residence on the farm receiving the exemption. (2007)

SCHOOL TAX REDUCTION

We support continuation of the STAR rebate checks being handled through school tax reduction. (2005)

STATE BUDGET/FUNDS

SWEEPING DEDICATED FUNDS

We strongly oppose the practice of sweeping dedicated funds for the purpose of balancing the State Budget, and that appropriate legislation be enacted to prevent this practice. (2008)

UNFUNDED MANDATES

We support legislation which would restrict the imposition of unfunded mandates on political subdivisions (local governments) of the state. (2008)

STATE OFFICES/PROGRAMS

LOTTERY MONEY FOR EDUCATION

We support the increase of money sent to schools above budgeted state funding and further that more assistance be given to New York students attending colleges in New York State and that the amount spent for lottery advertising be cut to help meet the above goals. (2009)

DISABILITY BENEFITS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

We support legislation to amend General Municipal Law, Sect. 207-c, to require that disability retirement benefits be given to any law enforcement officer who has been receiving benefits for a period of 36 months without the ability to return to work. (2006)

TRANSPORTATION

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY TAX

We urge the New York State Legislature to repeal the Metropolitan Commuter Transportation Mobility Tax (MCTMT) for the counties of Rockland, Orange, Putnam and Dutchess. (2009)

WATERWAYS

NEW YORK STATE CANAL SYSTEM

We strongly recommend the New York State Thruway Authority implement means to increase income from the direct use of the New York State Canal System. (2005)