



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

BRIAN M. KOLB
Minority Leader

December 20, 2018

The Honorable Andrew Cuomo
Governor, State of New York
Executive Chamber, State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

Each year, the Legislature is presented with new challenges and opportunities as we begin our critical work to improve the lives of New Yorkers. The start of a new legislative session always brings enthusiasm and energy, and I am hopeful 2019 will be filled with thoughtful and well-balanced reforms that make our great state even better.

The Assembly Minority Conference is excited to begin a new legislative session. However, there are many serious economic obstacles facing New Yorkers and, of course, the potential for a worsening budget deficit. We cannot let these problems fester. The time to act is Day 1 of the upcoming session.

The priority, for both the Legislature and the Executive, must be addressing the “kitchen-table” issues impacting all New Yorkers. An agenda designed to score political points cannot take the place of sound, common-sense policymaking. All of our important work must take place in the full view of the public. The backroom deals constructed at the 11th hour must come to an end.

Once again, I renew my call for all legislative leaders to be included in budget negotiations and major policy discussions. The millions of people represented by the minority conferences deserve a voice in the process and a seat at the table.

I look forward to seeing the 2019-20 Executive Budget Proposal and hope you will consider these priority policies for New Yorkers:

Overhaul Economic Development and Promote Job Creation by

- Implementing oversight and transparency of designated lump-sum appropriations that involve the Comptroller and Attorney General
- Conducting an independent audit of all state economic development programs
- Providing tax and regulatory relief to small businesses – the real job creators
- Speeding up the phase-in of the Middle Class Tax Cuts enacted in 2016

Restore Accountability to Government by

- Replacing JCOPE with a truly independent oversight commission

- Enacting term limits for legislative leaders and committee chairs
- Keeping spending at a true 2% cap, rather than transferring funds to achieve the cap to balance the state deficit

Protect Critical Infrastructure by

- Significantly increasing state support for the CHIPS local road program
- Utilizing settlement funds to improve roads, bridges, culverts, and other critical infrastructure, including water systems
- Eliminating the 25% local match requirement under the Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) program, so that more communities can benefit
- Developing a Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) action plan that directs existing resources to immediate infrastructure needs without raising taxes, tolls, or fees
- Establishing an MTA Fiscal Oversight Control Board to oversee and regulate its finances

Restructure Medicaid and Property Taxes by

- Implementing a gradual state takeover of the local share of Medicaid
- Taking over the growth in property taxes for school districts and local governments that remain under the Real Property Tax (RPT) Cap
- Making the RPT Cap permanent
- Creating a Property Tax Redesign Team responsible for producing recurring savings
- Prohibiting any new unfunded mandates

Protect Our Most Vulnerable New Yorkers by

- Supporting people with developmental disabilities by increasing funding for housing, respite, transportation, and employment opportunities in their home communities
- Ensuring Direct-Care Workers receive a living wage

Keep Education a High Budget Priority by

- Targeting school aid increases to low-wealth and high-need school districts
- Continuing to increase support to New York State's special needs schools
- Ensuring continued increases in Library Aid to support community institutions
- Implementing career-ready educational programs for high school students

Make College More Affordable by

- Increasing Community College Base Aid
- Raising the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) household income threshold, increasing the minimum and maximum award, and restoring graduate TAP
- Reducing taxable income for people paying student loans

Support Low-Income Families by

- Creating a commission to research and implement a new payment method to eradicate the public assistance "Benefit Cliff"
- Expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) in New York
- Doubling the New York State Child and Dependent Care Credit
- Creating an incentive for New Yorkers on unemployment to work part-time

Make Health Insurance More Affordable by

- Implementing reforms to reduce health care costs and expand coverage to all New Yorkers
- Controlling long-term care premium rate increases, which have skyrocketed at an unsustainable rate
- Protecting small business health care plans from catastrophic decisions by state agencies

Keep our Communities Safe by

- Creating an Emergency Temporary Commission on School Safety and Security
- Strengthening New York's response to domestic violence by providing greater resources to support law enforcement and victims
- Enacting "Brittany's Law" to create a violent felony offender registry
- Repurposing SAFE Act funding for effective crime prevention programs
- Providing additional resources for the prevention and treatment of heroin and opioid addiction

As we work next year under a new power dynamic in Albany, it is imperative that we do not let politics shape policy that can be detrimental to New York families and businesses. Therefore, I make the following recommendations:

- Do not enact reforms that jeopardize the integrity of elections
- Do not continue to hand out billions in subsidies for economic development projects that never materialize or fail to meet job creation expectations
- Do not shift to a single-payer health care system that will double or triple the cost and result in a loss of benefits for many New Yorkers
- Do not make the rights of dangerous criminals a priority over New York families
- Do not place new, job-killing mandates or regulatory burdens on small businesses
- Do not infringe on the Second Amendment Rights of law abiding citizens – instead let's make our schools and communities safer

I feel these measures would benefit New Yorkers in every corner of the state and would help move New York in the right direction. I look forward to working together on these issues and other challenges we face in 2019. Best wishes for a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

Sincerely,



Brian M. Kolb
Assembly Minority Leader

BMK/jk

cc: Hon. Carl E. Heastie, Speaker of the Assembly
Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Majority Leader of the Senate, Elect
Hon. John J. Flanagan, Majority Leader of the Senate