



Alexandria Wojcik, Acting Mayor

Trustees: Allen Ross, Richard Souto, & Stevie Susta

*Nancy Branco
Treasurer*

*Gene Bleu Terwilliger
Superintendent Public Works*

**Testimony of Alexandria Wojcik, (Acting) Mayor, Village of New Paltz
Submitted to NYS Senate Finance & Assembly Ways & Means Committee Chairs
For Feb. 11, 2026 Joint Legislative Hearing on Local Government**

Dear Senate Finance Chair Krueger, Assembly Ways & Means Chair Pretlow, and members of the New York State Legislature:

My name is Alexandria Wojcik, and I am the (Acting) Mayor of the Village of New Paltz. I'm writing to urge the state legislature to adopt the Invest in Our New York package, a slate of four common-sense bills aimed at transforming New York into a more equitable state. The Village of New Paltz unanimously adopted a resolution in support of this bill package last year, and the Village and Town of New Paltz Boards plan to pass a Joint resolution of support at our February 18th meeting.

80% of the Village of New Paltz population rent our homes; a very large percentage of whom are severely rent burdened (I know I am). Even though we've increased our rental housing stock by 25% over the past 5 years, with even more rentals coming online in the near future; even though we've passed Good Cause Eviction, and have had an Affordable Housing Law and Short Term Rental Law on the books for years; the housing crisis is at a fever pitch in our community.

Every Tuesday, volunteers set up a free food giveaway outside the former fire station garage bay at our village hall, and there's usually a line out the door; when our Free Food Fridge, also at Village Hall, is up-and-running, not an hour goes by without someone visiting in search of food. The same can be said of all the other food pantries in our community, including Family of New Paltz, and the food pantry on campus as well. It's not even SNAP cuts that are the biggest issue in our community, it's that regular working people cannot afford to pay rent and to eat.

I share these anecdotes to demonstrate some ways in which the affordability crisis is impacting even the gem mountain university community of the Hudson Valley. The fact is, New York remains a deeply unaffordable state, and brutal federal funding cuts are exacerbating the crisis. The cost of living crisis is here, happening now, and the Governor's proposed executive budget isn't helping matters.

Meanwhile, I am working through my first village budget as Mayor. Believe me when I say that the rainy days are here. Imagine being a mayor for only a few weeks and gaming-out your municipality's future, legitimately asking yourself which scenario will hurt my neighbors the least: raising water rates, or raising property taxes? Because both options will cause harm to my community, which endures among the highest poverty rates in our region. Why this budgetary conundrum? For starters, the biggest cost burden in our budget year after year is healthcare for our small but mighty team of staff – and that cost is only rising.



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Imagine if we taxed the ultra wealthy, and provided healthcare for all. That would mean property taxes and water bills would go towards fixing water mains, streets, and sidewalks; and providing more resources including third spaces such as the skate park project we've been working on for 6 long years.

Our communities are in crisis, but you wouldn't know it from Governor Hochul's actions. In her executive budget proposal, the governor has failed to reckon with the devastating scale of federal funding cuts, or include any progressive revenue. She has left small municipalities like New Paltz out to dry.

This is why the Village of New Paltz supports the [Invest in Our New York package](#), which, if passed, would raise tens of billions of dollars through a combination of personal income tax increases on the top 5% of earners, corporate tax reforms targeting the most profitable corporations (fewer than the top 1%), and closure of loopholes that allow millionaires and billionaires to shield their wealth from their tax liability.

The Invest in Our New York package includes the following proposals:

- The Progressive Income Tax Bill ([S.1622-Jackson/A.1281-Meeks](#)), which would raise more than \$21 billion annually by making personal income taxes more progressive and ensuring that millionaires and billionaires pay their fair share. Right now someone making \$215,000 pays the same rate as someone making \$1 million, and New Yorkers making \$5 million and \$25 million pay the same tax rate; there is no higher tax for billionaires. This bill would add 10 new tax brackets to New York's personal income tax structure so that the top 5% of earners pay what they owe.
- The Corporate Tax Bill ([A.1971-Kelles, Shrestha](#)), which would raise \$5 billion annually by raising corporate taxes on the most profitable corporations doing business in the state, ensuring that those with over \$5 million in profits pay what they owe in taxes while keeping New York competitive with neighboring states in the Northeast. (Currently, corporations pay less in taxes than they did in the 1990s.)
- The Capital Gains Tax ([S.1439-Rivera/A.676-Kim](#)), which would raise \$12 billion annually by implementing a capital-gains tax. Currently, the federal government taxes investment income at a lower rate than working people's hard-earned hourly wages and salaries. This proposal would close that tax gap by adding a state-level surcharge on capital-gains income over \$500,000 a year.



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- The Heirs Tax ([S.914-Brisport/A.2049-Solages](#)), which would raise \$4 billion annually by overhauling the current inheritance tax system to make it more equitable, allowing the state to tax inheritances exceeding \$250,000. (Currently, a New Yorker can inherit \$5 million and pay no taxes.)

At a time of enormous socioeconomic pain and suffering, we have a fundamental choice to make. We can continue to allow the very rich to get much richer while everyone else gets poorer and poorer. Or we can tax the ultra-rich to make sure everyone pays their fair share, and in turn improve the health and well-being of ALL New Yorkers.

It is time for the state to act on behalf of the working class who are hurting like they have never hurt before, not the billionaire class who are doing phenomenally well and have never had it so good. We must tax the rich, and invest in our New York, without delay!

Thank you again for this important opportunity to share issues affecting the Village of New Paltz.

Sincerely,

Alexandria Wojcik