



**Testimony before the Joint Fiscal
Committees on the SFY 2026-27 Executive
Budget Labor/Workforce Development
Budget Hearing February 25, 2026**

The Alliance for Quality Education, a statewide coalition of community groups, dedicated to organizing low income Black, brown, and immigrant parents to advocate for the wellbeing of their children, starting at birth and throughout school years to graduation. We are committed to education for liberation, translating to racial, economic, and social justice for all. We are also a proud member of the **Empire State Campaign for Child Care is a statewide coalition of parents, educators, and advocates who believe that every family in New York State deserves high quality, universal child care and that every child care educator deserves to earn a thriving wage. The campaign was founded in 2017, and advocates at the state and federal level for investment in child care that best serves the needs of New York’s families and child care educators.**

Top Labor/Workforce Development Budget Recommendations for 2026

AQE and the Empire State Campaign for Child Care urges the legislature to build upon the Governor’s historic child care proposals by providing ongoing and reliable compensation supplements to all members of the child care workforce. This fund is essential until New York achieves statewide universal child care that pays providers adequate rates to pay the workforce a thriving wage.

This can be achieved by creating a \$1.2B permanent state fund to increase child care worker compensation sufficient to offer all members of the child care workforce a significant boost in income (**Child Care Workforce Pay Equity Fund S.5533 (Brisport)/A.492 (Hevesi)**). Finding and retaining child care educators and those in supporting roles is the number one issue we hear from the field. We cannot achieve

universal child care without recruiting and retaining far more early childhood educators. [The average wage for the child care workforce \(94% women, and more than 53% people of color\) is approximately \\$38,000, with family-based providers earning even less. In contrast, the median annual salary for full-time New York workers is approximately \\$67,000 per year.](#)

The \$1.2B state fund would boost wages by approximately \$12,000 - similar to the \$14,000 supplement (on average) that Washington D.C. implemented in 2022. [Washington DC's increased compensation has significantly reduced turnover in the field, boosting child care educator employment, and expanding capacity.](#) Looking ahead, New York must establish a minimum pay scale and career ladder based upon agreed upon criteria. This pay scale will inform compensation supplement levels after the base pay scale for all has been increased.

Raising Revenues¹

AQE is a proud member of the Invest In Our New York campaign. We have a slate of bills that raise more than enough revenue to fund all of the priorities you hear today and throughout all the budget hearings. Due to the OBBBA, New York is losing up to \$23 billion per year in federal funding, while New York's millionaires are set to benefit from a [\\$12 billion federal tax cut annually](#). A [recent Siena](#) poll on raising taxes on the ultra-wealthy² found overwhelming support across the state among voters and taxpayers.³ The governor has said it herself: millionaires and billionaires are not leaving the state; everyday New Yorkers are leaving, because they cannot afford to live here.

By implementing tax proposals such as the capital gains tax ([S.1439 Rivera/A.676-Kim](#)), a bill that raises approximately \$12 billion annually and all the other measures mentioned above, New York can fully fund Foundation Aid, give thriving wages to the child care workforce and expand capacity across the state, and still have money to fund wages for home care workers and hospitals. If New York implemented the corporate tax bill ([S.953 Hoylman/A.1971-Kelles-Shrestha](#)), which raises \$7 billion annually, it could fund an ambitious housing plan. And, to be clear, the state already has money; these options only provide more.

There are other revenue-raising options as well that would collectively raise tens of billions of dollars annually. Passing these very modest taxes on highly-profitable corporations and ultra-wealthy individuals has the power to transform our state and fill federal funding cuts, including a \$13 billion dollar cut to our healthcare system. We know that the legislature deeply values equality and justice for all people, of all classes, races, genders, and communities. We have the opportunity to actually deliver on that dream, ensuring that children have homes and

¹ <https://www.investinourny.org/2026agenda>

² <https://www.cityandstateny.com/policy/2025/11/new-poll-shows-taxing-rich-very-popular/409252/>

³ <https://scri.siena.edu/2024/01/05/67-of-new-york-voters-support-raising-taxes-on-profitable-corporations-and-highest-5-of-earners/>

great schools, that everyone has a thriving wage, and that no one wants for the bare minimum like food or healthcare. Passing these taxes will also transform our budget system, moving from a stop-gap budgeting system that struggles from year to year and where many of our legislative champions have to fight annually for limited grant program funding for things like literacy initiatives, to one where we have more than enough revenue to meet the needs of our people and ensure fairness in our system of taxation. The ultra-wealthy and multi-billion dollar corporations do not need more giveaways and tax breaks, but the 95% of us who live outside that world need justice and investment. You have a choice here: to show where the state's priorities lie and do it in a way that invests in our New York, in our future.