

Unshackle Upstate Announces Initiative to Inform Voters on Election Day

Last Update: 2/25 12:23 pm

From Unshackle Upstate:

Unshackle Upstate announced a major campaign to send a message to state legislators that voters stand ready to hold them accountable for the state's poor financial condition. The pro-business, pro-taxpayer coalition is declaring November 2 (Election Day) as Judgment Day - for all New York State legislators, as well as for citizens.

"It's no secret that New Yorkers are angry, frustrated and fed up with the state's outrageous taxes and continued over-spending," said Brian Sampson, executive director of Unshackle Upstate. "But simply complaining, no matter how loudly, won't bring the needed change. It hasn't worked thus far. It's time for New York state's voters to get informed, and be willing to make a judgment about who is best suited to direct our state's future."

"Our message to legislators is that we think New Yorkers are ready to do just that," Sampson added. "Those in offices at the Capital need to listen to the voters of this state – all the voters, not just certain special interest groups. And if they can't or won't do that, if they won't support issues and legislation that will bring much-needed change, then voters will act accordingly at the polls on Judgment Day - Nov. 2, 2010."

Lou Santoni, president and CEO of the Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce, said the straightforward approach of The Scorecard and the Judgment Day campaign lay out a clear agenda for legislators.

"The question, simply put, is this: are you supporting policies that help us or hurt us? The top priorities in Greater Binghamton are jobs, property tax relief and removing obstacles to economic development," said Lou Santoni, president and CEO of the Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce. "We'll be eager to see if these are the same priorities as our elected officials."

As part of the Judgment Day campaign, which will include an ongoing advertising, media and social media campaign aimed at voters, Unshackle Upstate today unveiled "The Scorecard: A Judgment Day Primer for Voters." The Scorecard will be frequently updated to provide New Yorkers with information on how each of the 212 legislators vote on various pro-taxpayer and job creator legislation, as well as on this year's state budget.

"Voters have to stand up and be counted if we are to bring about change to the way New York state government operates," said Sandy Parker, president and CEO of the Rochester Business Alliance, a founding Unshackle partner. "Voters have a right and a duty to know how they are being represented by their state legislators, and that is reflected in how those legislators vote on issues that are critical to the economy and job growth. I firmly believe some of this information will be eye-opening. And come November, we want taxpayers to use that information to choose the best people, the right people to send to Albany."

Taxpayers have begun speaking out through the Unshackle Army, which was created on a social media platform to give New York's residents a forum for airing their concerns. To date, thousands have joined the Unshackle Army, with many of their comments echoing these of

one New York resident: “We need to hold Albany accountable and dump anyone who refuses to listen to the average working person.” The Scorecard is directly aimed at enforcing legislators’ accountability to their constituents.

“For far too long, ‘accountability’ has been a foreign concept to Albany electeds, and the only mechanism to make them understand it is a continuous, close, watchdog approach,” said Andrew J. Rudnick, president and CEO of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership, also a founding Unshackle partner. “Either the electeds themselves will take notice or Unshackle Upstate will make sure the voters do. Change will come to Albany this year – either on the floor of the state legislature or in the voting booth on Judgment Day, November 2.”

“Accountability requires measurement,” said Garry Douglas, president of the Plattsburgh-North Country Chamber of Commerce. “This report card is designed to measure the actual performance of state legislators in terms of doing what must be done to turn our state and its economy around. Knowing the measurements up front should give everyone a roadmap for job creation and economic growth. Let’s see if that roadmap is followed.”

“Taxpayers, especially those responsible for job creation in New York, have reached a level of frustration with New York State government never seen before in recent history,” said Darlene Kerr, president of the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce. “Voters are clearly watching for our representatives and leaders in Albany with serious expectations of ending the status quo of unsustainable spending.”

The Scorecard and Judgment Day campaign will help Unshackle Upstate advance its 2010 policy agenda, aimed at creating an environment that will help New York’s economy grow and create jobs. For more on the policy agenda and other Unshackle efforts, refer to subsequent materials in this kit.