

New York's economic future is at stake on Judgment Day

By now, you're probably sick of all the political advertisements on television and radio, the lawn signs, the billboards. You've had enough of the rhetoric, the name calling and the campaign promises. You just want it all to be over.

Well, I absolutely understand. There is a reason they call it the "silly season."

But I implore you, no matter how fed up or disgusted you are with the campaigning: Don't let that discourage you from heading to the polls on Nov. 2. This year it is more important than ever that you vote.

As you've no doubt seen, Unshackle Upstate is referring to Election Day as Judgment Day for the New York Legislature. That's because there is so much at stake—specifically the direction of New York and its economy. The public officials chosen by the voters of this state can significantly affect that outcome.

On Nov. 2, voters will choose a new governor and lieutenant governor. They will also vote on state comptroller, attorney general and all 212 seats in the Legislature. It is our chance to take back our state government, to put in office people who will do what's best for New York: Control spending, lower taxes and create jobs.

With the mere act of casting your ballot, you remind all elected officials that your approval is neither automatic nor to be taken for granted. They have to earn your vote with service, and that means acting



ON BUSINESS
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in the best interest of taxpayers to lower state spending and reduce taxes.

But for whom you cast that ballot will also send a strong message.

New York State is in crisis. Years of uncontrolled spending and taxing have left it with shaky finances.

New Yorkers have long paid some of the highest taxes in the nation. Yet in the last two years, the Legislature passed laws that hit the average family with \$1,300 in new taxes and fees.

This summer, *U.S. News & World Report* stated that since 2009, New York's enacted and proposed tax hikes totaled \$419 per person—far more than any other state including California, where the additional tax burden was \$312 per capita. According to the report, New York by itself accounted for 29 percent of all the state tax increases proposed and enacted since 2009.

The 2010-11 budget added \$1.2 billion in new taxes, in large part to cover the whopping \$136 billion spending bill and

close an enormous—and growing—budget gap. Lawmakers balanced the budget by relying on their usual one-shots and temporary enhancements, not by addressing the state's spending problems.

That makes it certain that the budget gap will continue to rear its ugly head in future years, possibly even later this year. In fact, the comptroller's recently released annual financial condition report estimates that the state's cumulative spending gap could ex-

Voters should not let disgust with Albany keep them away from the polls. Neither should they just "throw the bums out," unseating even the incumbents who have done a good job.

ceed \$37 billion through its fiscal year 2013-14, largely because lawmakers have failed to find a permanent solution to the discrepancy between spending and revenue.

Now when something like that happens in our homes and business, we have only one choice. We are forced to tighten our belts, to purchase only what we can afford. New York hasn't done that, and we're all paying the price—in lost jobs and neighbors, as people leave the area for better,

more affordable opportunities.

That's why whom you choose to send to Albany is so critical. We need lawmakers who understand the dire realities and are willing to be leaders, to be accountable for the tough decisions it will take to fix this mess.

If you're uncertain who that is, I urge you to get informed about your candidate choices. For starters, check out the endorsements made by the Rochester Business Alliance (www.RochesterBusinessAlliance.com) and Unshackle Upstate (www.UnshackleUpstate.com).

I've heard the anti-incumbent calls to "throw the bums out," but I don't buy them. There are incumbent legislators who get it and have done an admirable job of representing their constituents. But in cases where that hasn't happened, new blood is needed.

I don't necessarily support term limits, either. Why? Because you, the voter, have the right to impose term limits every time there is an election. If you don't like what your representative is doing, you simply vote for his or her challenger and put a new person in office.

So again, I implore you to exercise that right. Cut through the campaign rhetoric, and make a choice for a better future. Vote on Judgment Day, Nov. 2.

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