

Coalition unveils plan for state mandate relief

By [THOMAS ADAMS](#) - 11/1/2011 3:46:21 PM

A coalition of 11 business, local government and educational organizations launched a six-point plan for state mandate relief Tuesday in Albany. The plan includes a taxpayer-friendly pension system and a ban on new mandates.

"Making our communities more affordable and preventing the insolvency of local governments and school districts needs to be our top priority," said Brian Sampson, the Rochester-based executive director of the Unshackle Upstate coalition of businesses, in a statement.

The Let New York Work coalition's agenda includes

- making the pension system predictable and affordable with reduced benefits or higher contributions from employees, amendments to the state's arbitration statute,
- reduced construction costs for public-private projects,
- a freeze on step increases for expired contracts,
- minimum health insurance contributions for public employees and retirees and
- no more mandates on municipalities, school districts and taxpayers.

"A more competitive cost climate is essential for promoting new investment and new job growth in New York," said Heather Briccetti, acting president and CEO of the Business Council of New York State Inc.

"The enactment of a 2 percent cap on the growth of property taxes was the first step. By working together, members of this newly formed coalition hope to rein in the high cost of state mandates and provide much-needed fiscal relief to municipalities."