



2009 Policy Agenda

I) Reduce State Spending

- Continue to implement targeted spending reductions in State government -- without raising taxes
- Since health care and education together comprise 70% of the State budget, the State unfortunately has no choice but to cut back in these two critical areas. Unshackle recommends:
 - Hold School Aid spending flat to current year levels (2008-09) – up to \$2.4B in savings
 - Hold Medicaid spending flat to current year levels (2008-09) – up to \$2.7B in savings
 - Implement necessary reforms for long-term sustainable savings
 - Avoid a “one-size-fits-all” approach in Medicaid reimbursement rates.
- Continue to identify ways to save taxpayer dollars and become more efficient through government consolidation and shared services-- \$2B-plus in savings
 - Consolidate State agencies (e.g., Thruway Authority and Department of Transportation)
 - Operate correctional facilities at capacity and close underutilized psychiatric centers
 - Centralize payroll, purchasing and personnel functions for State agencies
- Restructure public employee benefits to more closely align such benefits with comparable private sector benefits, particularly in high-cost areas such as health insurance and pension benefits
- Focus on permanent structural reforms (not one-offs or cuts only) -- Taylor Law, Wicks Law and 240/241 top the list of onerous NYS laws that need to be tackled
- Work to enact many of the reforms highlighted in the final report of New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness – headed by former Lt. Governor Stan Lundine

II) Property Tax Cap

- Rein in ever-rising local property taxes by adopting a meaningful property tax cap
- Implement cost-saving initiatives outlined in the final report of the New York State Commission on Property Tax Relief

III) Energy Relief

- Low-cost power programs must be centralized, streamlined and judged with one set of progressive, pro-business selection criteria
- Reduce taxes and other statutory and regulatory costs on energy
- Promote effective infrastructure investment in the energy delivery system in order to modernize the grid to account for improved reliability, diversity in generation supply, clean energy sources and overall supply accessibility
- Support continued operation of existing, economically viable, base-load nuclear, coal and clean coal, generating facilities as a means of ensuring stable and competitive prices
- Renew Article X of the Public Service Law
- Expedite a rational DEC permit process for hydrofracture drilling for natural gas and oil exploration in the Southern Tier and Central New York
- Modify the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to include meaningful consumer protection measures