

The Better Choice Budget Campaign – Statement of Support

Like other states, New York faces a crisis. In this crushing recession, families' needs are rising and the resources to meet them are falling. We need to respond in ways that grow the economy by investing in working families and communities across the state. Educated New Yorkers, affordable health care and housing, vital state services, a strong safety net and a sound transportation infrastructure are all essential for a healthy state economy, today and in the future.

Rather than slashing education, health care and the other services that New York families depend on, the Governor and the Legislature should make **a better choice: a balanced approach that uses existing resources efficiently and raises additional revenues in ways that will not harm our state's already fragile economy.**

This is not the time for actions that will hinder the growth of New York's economy or hurt the children and families hit hardest by the economic downturn. There are better choices.

Federal Action: Additional Fiscal Relief for the States

- At least 48 states are experiencing major budget shortfalls. We urge the NYS Congressional delegation to support the President's call for additional federal relief for the states during the recession. Since the states have to balance their budgets in good times and bad, Congress should extend the state fiscal relief that it enacted last year. This will reduce the amount of economically harmful spending cuts that the states have to make this year.

State Actions: A balanced response to the 2010-2011 budget shortfall should include:

- **Closing loopholes** that allow large, profitable corporations to avoid paying their fair share of state taxes.
- **Reducing the amount of state work that is contracted out** to high-priced, for-profit consultants who are being overpaid to do work that state workers can do better for less.
- **Lowering prescription drug prices** for state and local governments and New York consumers by using New York's purchasing power to negotiate fair deals with the drug companies.
- **Making economic development/tax credit programs** like Industrial Development Agencies (IDAs) and the Brownfield Clean-Up Program more effective and accountable and allowing the Empire Zones Program to expire.
- **Temporarily reducing the Stock Transfer Tax Rebate** from 100% to 80% so the finance sector helps the state through the current economic downturn which was caused in part by the excesses of many Wall Street firms.
- **Curtailing growing obesity rates** in NY children by adding a 1 cent per ounce tax on sugary beverages.
- **Ensuring that Reservation sales of cigarettes to non-Native Americans** are properly taxed (by collecting those taxes before the products reach the reservations while still providing Native Americans with tax-free cigarettes).
- **Using the Tax Stabilization Reserve Fund (TSRF)** to cover the Governor's anticipated gap in this year's budget rather than rolling it over to 2010-11. The TSRF is specifically for such end-of-year shortfalls.
- **Helping the environment** by instituting a minimal plastic bag tax to reduce the use of 6.3 billion bags in NYS each year.

We support the Better Choice Budget Campaign:

Contact: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

Please return to New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness, 212 Great Oaks Blvd., Albany, New York 12203. Fax to: 518-869-8649 or fill out the form on the web at www.abetterchoiceforny.org.