



March 30, 2018

Dear Legislator:

As you continue negotiations on a budget, National Taxpayers Union and our members across New York urge you to adhere to fiscal responsibility and avoid additional burdens on taxpayers in a rush to avoid a shutdown. We are particularly concerned about numerous media reports that suggest there could be a number of provisions that would harm taxpayers. NTU urges lawmakers to keep the following principles in mind:

**No new tax or fee increases:** It has been reported that there could be as much as \$1 billion in new taxes and fees included in the budget. Democrats have proposed a new \$2.75 surcharge on ride sharing services like Uber, Lyft, and taxi companies in Manhattan. New taxes could also be placed on internet purchases, medication, and pharmaceutical manufacturers. While unlikely to be included, lawmakers should also oppose any individual or corporate tax increases. Taxpayers already suffer from the highest tax burden in the U.S., and any further increases will cause more residents or businesses to flee to lower-taxed states like Florida, North Carolina, and Texas.

**No pay hikes for politicians:** Lawmakers already make \$80,000 per year (and closer to \$100,000 after accounting for perks), which is 150 percent higher than the median income for the average New Yorker. Since lawmakers only work part-time and often have another career, it would be unwise to use more taxpayer funds to line the pockets of elected officials.

**No bailouts for private companies:** Lawmakers have discussed the option of bailing out one specific casino that operates within the state. It has been reported that the casino is requesting a \$14 million tax break per year in order to stay in business.

**Spending reform:** The budget is expected to cost \$170 billion, a 4.1 percent increase over last year's budget - twice the rate of inflation in New York. Addiction to spending is an increasing problem for the state government. Rather than spend more, lawmakers should look to streamline existing programs and root out waste, fraud, and abuse, all of which could free up money to pay down the state's \$354 billion debt or give back to taxpayers. New York needs to cut its spending to a manageable level and reform its burdensome tax code to spur economic growth.

We urge you to pass a fiscally responsible budget that addresses New York's core needs without unnecessarily raising taxes or adding to the state's debt problem.

Sincerely,

Thomas Aiello  
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