



2022 ADVOCACY AGENDA



ABOUT US

Upstate United is a non-partisan, pro-taxpayer, pro-economic growth, education and advocacy coalition made up of business and trade organizations from across Upstate New York. Our primary mission is to make Upstate

New York a more affordable place to live and a better place to do business.

As Albany becomes increasingly dominated by downstate interests, Upstate United is recognized as the

leading advocacy organization for Upstate communities and taxpayers. Our organization has consistently demonstrated an ability to raise awareness on key issues and achieve meaningful impacts on policy outcomes.

OUR PARTNERS



OUR CALL TO ACTION

As a result of New York's ongoing health crisis, the state is in the midst of an economic crisis.

Millions of overburdened Upstate New Yorkers are now facing higher prices for food, gas and other goods and services due to historic inflation.

The best way to tackle the state's economic crisis is to get our economy growing. A recent Siena Research Institute poll found that creating economic opportunities for New Yorkers is a top priority for voters. During the 2022 legislative session, Albany must ease the burden it places on employers and employees and enact pro-

NOW MORE THAN EVER, WE NEED TO GET OUR ECONOMY MOVING – NOT OUR PEOPLE.

The last thing residents need is for leaders in Albany to enact measures that drive up the cost of living even higher.

Upstate employers are also under extraordinary pressure. Businesses that managed to survive over the last two years are struggling with labor shortages and supply chain issues as well as New York's burdensome taxes, mandates and regulations.

growth policies before more families flee New York for good.

Now more than ever, we need to get our economy moving — not our people.

In order to achieve economic growth across our Upstate communities, our organization has developed the following advocacy agenda that focuses on key issues and policies that have the potential to impact millions of Upstate taxpayers.

PREVENT DEVASTATING UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE TAX INCREASES

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly 2 million New Yorkers were unemployed. As a result, the state's Unemployment Insurance (UI) fund ran out of money and New York ultimately had to borrow \$11.9 billion from the federal government to cover its UI payments. While some of that loan has been repaid, New York still owes Washington \$9 billion. Additionally, the state's UI fund – which is currently insolvent – must be replenished. New York's small businesses – which makes up the majority of the private sector – cannot afford a \$9 billion tax increase.

In a recent report, Comptroller DiNapoli called for a collaborative approach to address this crisis, "Working together, New York State, participating employers and the federal government can develop solutions that restore the Trust Fund while allowing the ongoing economic recovery to continue."

We demand that leaders in Albany tap unused federal relief funds to provide UI relief to employers. Without this relief, many Upstate businesses will not be able to keep their doors open.

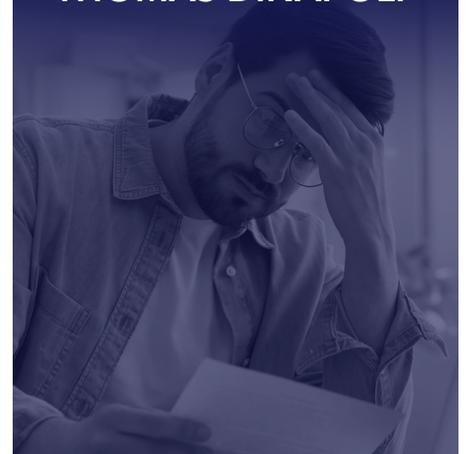
"STATE POLICY MAKERS SHOULD PURSUE ALTERNATIVES SUCH AS ADDITIONAL FEDERAL SUPPORT AND THE USE OF FEDERAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT ON NEW YORK BUSINESSES IN THE MIDST OF AN UNCERTAIN ECONOMIC RECOVERY."

**- NEW YORK STATE
COMPTROLLER
THOMAS DINAPOLI**



**MORE THAN HALF THE STATES IN THE U.S.
ARE USING FEDERAL RELIEF PROGRAMS TO
ADDRESS THEIR UI FUNDING ISSUES.**

*Source: National Conference of State Legislatures,
ARPA State Fiscal Recovery Fund Allocations, Unemployment Trust Fund*



EXTEND THE BROWNFIELD CLEANUP PROGRAM

Upstate United supports a ten-year extension of New York's Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP). The BCP is a cost-effective environmental remediation and economic development tool that has benefited communities across the state. Since its creation 2005, more than 500 sites have been redeveloped – providing

good-paying jobs and restoring long-standing eyesores.

S.7210/A.8228, a bill currently sponsored by Senator Tim Kennedy and Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes, would extend the tax credit eligibility through 2027 and the

certificate of completion end date through 2031.

Extending this program will benefit the environment, our communities and our economy.

While we support that bill in its current form, we believe the following amendments should be considered:

- **EXTEND THE BCP THROUGH 2032;**
- **EXTEND THE TIME FOR ENTRY OF SITES INTO BCP AND CLAIMING THE TAX CREDITS;**
- **INCREASE TAX CREDITS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS;**
- **EXPAND BCP ELIGIBILITY TO MULTIPLE LOTS ON A CONTAMINATED SITE; AND**
- **OTHER TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS OF QUALIFYING COSTS.**



“NEW YORK’S BROWNFIELD CLEANUP PROGRAM IS ADVANCING THE REBIRTH OF COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE STATE BY RETURNING HUNDREDS OF UNDERUTILIZED PROPERTIES BACK TO PRODUCTIVE USE, CREATING NEW HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.”

**- NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
COMMISSIONER BASIL SEGGOS**

REJECT A GOVERNMENT-RUN SINGLE PAYER SYSTEM

Upstate United is opposed to a single payer health insurance system. S.5474/A.6058, also known as the New York Health Act, would outlaw private health insurance and replace it with a government-run system.

This radical scheme would be funded by \$253 billion in new taxes and eliminate more than 160,000 jobs.

Considering the recent mismanagement of large public programs, employer-based organizations, unions, health care providers and consumers are right to oppose another costly and bloated government-run program.

A single payer system failed in Vermont and there's no doubt

that it would be a total disaster here in New York.

We support efforts to improve our existing system, reduce costs and achieve universal coverage. With 95% of New Yorkers currently insured, this goal is possible without destroying jobs and derailing the state's economic recovery.



THE NEW YORK HEALTH ACT WOULD ELIMINATE MORE THAN 50,000 JOBS ACROSS THE UPSTATE REGION.

Source: The Economic Impact of the New York Health Act

ENSURE ENERGY AFFORDABILITY AND RELIABILITY

Upstate United has been a staunch advocate for lower residential and commercial energy costs.

New Yorkers pay some of the highest energy prices in the nation with various taxes, fees and surcharges accounting for 25%-30% of a typical bill.

As sky-high inflation continues to drive up costs for families and businesses, we need our leaders in Albany to reject punitive proposals and embrace pro-growth measures.

- REJECT THE CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT ACT (CCIA);
- OPPOSE THE CREATION OF THE OFFICE OF UTILITY CONSUMER ADVOCATE;
- DRIVE ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC UTILITY REFORM;
- SUPPORT ACCESS TO CANADIAN HYDROPOWER;
- OPPOSE A BAN ON NATURAL GAS;
- OPPOSE NEW FUEL TAXES;
- UTILIZING THE STATE'S EXTENSIVE NATURAL GAS INFRASTRUCTURE TO TRANSPORT LOW CARBON FUELS TO HELP MEET CLIMATE GOALS; AND
- ADOPT AN ALL-OF-THE-ABOVE ENERGY SOURCE STRATEGY.

INVEST IN EMPLOYER-LED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The current labor shortage is hurting employers and stalling Upstate's economic recovery from COVID-19.

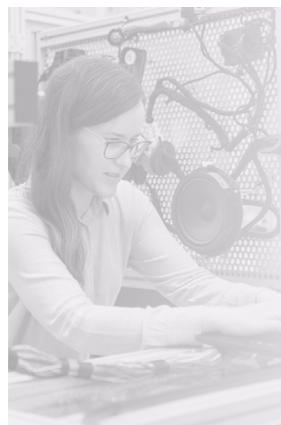
While employers are struggling to find qualified employees, too many people in Upstate remain underemployed. New York State should direct workforce development funds to qualified regional chambers of commerce and other employer-led organizations that are better aligned with the needs of regional labor markets. By engaging and empowering private sector employers, New York's workforce development efforts will be more effective, Upstate employers will be primed for growth, and more

Upstate residents will be secure in careers paying higher wages.

Concurrently, state leaders should reassess the outdated funding system for community colleges, which often undervalues and undermines

skills training. We strongly encourage elected leaders to embrace these smart and sensible strategies.

We look forward to working with our leaders in Albany and partners in the private sector to make this concept a reality.



61% OF UPSTATE EMPLOYERS STATED THAT THEIR LOCAL WORKFORCE IS NOT APPROPRIATELY TRAINED TO MEET THEIR EMPLOYMENT NEEDS.

Source: Siena Research Institute, 14th Annual Upstate New York Business Leader Survey

GUARANTEE UPSTATE'S FAIR SHARE OF INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Upstate United supports increased investments in Upstate transportation infrastructure. With massive federal infrastructure funding being allocated to New York, it is critical to not use the influx of funds to offset state spending on infrastructure. Instead, our leaders in Albany should increase funding in Upstate roads and bridges to correct past disparities in infrastructure spending. Parity between Upstate and downstate infrastructure investments will ensure that

we have a well-maintained and well-financed network of roads, bridges, rail, and airports that are essential to our communities and economy.

For years our leaders in Albany understood the importance of equitable infrastructure investment and funded the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the MTA capital programs with relatively parity. Unfortunately, that is no longer the case and the resulting funding inequities and neglect have left Upstate

transportation infrastructure in dire need of repair. 47% of New York's locally and state-maintained roads and highways are in poor or mediocre condition and 10% of all bridges are structurally deficient.

While the 2021-2022 state budget included increased funding for Upstate infrastructure, our leaders in Albany must ensure that there is infrastructure investment parity across all communities.

CLOSE UPSTATE GAPS TO BROADBAND ACCESS

Upstate United supports the expansion of high-quality and affordable broadband access for all New York State residents.

The coronavirus pandemic made clear that internet access is a necessity and a fundamental underpinning of almost every sector, from healthcare and education to the arts and public safety.

But despite considerable investment, more than 1 million – 13.8% – of New York households still lack access or a subscription to home broadband, according to a recent report by the state Comptroller’s office. That report also indicated that more than 250,000 households in New York do not have access to broadband and another 1 million households have not

ordered broadband when available for a number of reasons like affordability, etc. While the State broadband grant program has increased access, more work is essential and the state must work cooperatively with the private sector to reach these last locations.

With this in mind, we call for the following:

- **FOCUS ANTICIPATED FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING FOR BROADBAND ON CLOSING BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE GAPS ACROSS UPSTATE AS A PRIORITY.**
- **ELIMINATE THE RED TAPE AND POLICIES THAT MAKE FIBER OPTIC DEPLOYMENTS COST PROHIBITIVE.**
- **ROLL BACK ONEROUS REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS, LIKE THE USE AND OCCUPANCY FEE FOR STATE-OWNED RIGHTS-OF-WAY. THAT DISINCENTIVIZE INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED TO EXPAND CONNECTIVITY.**
- **SUPPORT AND FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF 5G SMALL DESIGNS THAT ALLOW MULTIPLE CARRIERS TO EXPEDITE DEPLOYMENT AND FOSTER COMPETITION.**



253,000 RESIDENTS
ACROSS THE STATE
DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO BROADBAND.
THE MAJORITY OF THOSE NEW YORKERS
LIVE IN UPSTATE COMMUNITIES.

Source: New York State Comptroller’s Office Report, Availability, Access and Affordability: Understanding Broadband Challenges in New York State



UNITED FOR GROWTH



@UPSTATENYUNITED



UPSTATEUNITED.COM