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Dear Friends,

January 11, 2015

*First and foremost I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a safe, happy, and prosperous New Year. This report both celebrates the victories **BALCONY** achieved in 2015 and looks forward to the challenges we face ahead in 2016. We hope that you find it engaging and useful. Thank you for your continuing commitment to achieving common ground in New York between business and labor and we wish you the very best in 2016.*



Andrew Pallotta,
BALCONY Co-Chair
and Executive Vice
President of the New
York State United
Teachers (NYSUT)

- Andy Pallotta, **BALCONY** Co-Chair and Executive VP of
NYSUT

2015-2016 WINTER REPORT



[Zadroga Act: At Long Last Congress Does the Right Thing for 9/11 First Responders](#)

[BALCONY Infrastructure Initiative: Gateway Forum and Video Report](#)

[Education: Common Core Contested and the Implications of Friedrichs v. California](#)

[Minimum Wage: The Fight for \\$15](#)

[Health Care: The Affordable Care Act Under Fire and the Need to Bolster Workers Safety](#)

[Affordable Housing: AFL-CIO HIT \\$1 Billion NYC Investment and an update on the Mayor's Plan for NYC](#)

[Fall Events Recap](#)

[New Members](#)



Zadroga Act: At Long Last Congress Does the Right Thing by 9/11 First Responders



(From left to right) Pat Lynch, President of the PBA; Mario Cileto, President of the NYS AFL-CIO; U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand; U.S. Representative Peter King; U.S. Representative Jerrold Nadler

Finally, following a year of debate, political posturing, and increasing public pressure, the U.S. Congress approved an extension of the Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act as a part of an omnibus spending bill, shortly thereafter President Barack Obama signed the bill into law.

The Zadroga measure extends the World Trade Center Health Program for 75 years at a cost of \$3.5 billion and renews the Victims' Compensation Fund for five years and fully funds it at \$4.6 billion.

The serious impact of attacks of 9/11 on the health of New Yorkers was both immediate and long-term. Those affected include not only first responders and emergency personnel, but also schoolchildren and residents of the entire lower Manhattan region. Over 13,000 WTC responders are sick and receiving treatment. Nearly 53,000 responders are enrolled in medical monitoring, and approximately 71,000 individuals are enrolled in the WTC Health Registry, indicating that they were exposed to the toxins and that their health could be negatively impacted.

The toxins these individuals were exposed to have resulted in serious health complications including respiratory, gastrointestinal, and mental health conditions.

BALCONY has long been an advocate of 9/11 responders and others whose health was negatively affected by their proximity to Ground Zero.

In 2006 **BALCONY** forewarned of the potential toxic cancer danger when we produced two informative PSA's warning residents and workers at the World Trade Center site to register for possible workers compensation. The spots, which aired on New York TV stations, featured Actress Sigourney Weaver and Jim Simpson, co-owners of the Flea Theater, and a Spanish version featured the late Jose Torres, former light heavyweight Champion (click below to watch!).



"We felt that these public service announcements were important to inform first responders and other New Yorkers exposed to toxins resulting from the attacks of 9/11 that were not alone or forgotten; they did not have to suffer in silence." - **Lou Gordon, BALCONY Director**

BALCONY will continue to advocate on behalf of affected individuals and support legislation that seeks to provide them with the medical and financial assistance they need and deserve. **BALCONY** member Mt. Sinai's Selikoff Centers for Occupational Health has been a key participant in first-responder screening and treatment.

Responses to the Zadroga Victory

"After months of tireless work by our 9/11 first responders, these brave men and women can finally feel secure that they will have healthcare for the rest of their



lives. This victory belongs to them," said **U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand**.



"This is the Christmas the 9/11 responders deserved: some peace of mind for each and every hero. Their selfless actions in response to that tragic day deserve a lifetime's worth of care and respect, so it is welcome news that Congress has finally agreed to fully fund the 9/11 Health Program, providing security to those brave men and women throughout their lives." said **U.S.**

Senator Charles Schumer.

Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney (D-NY), the lead sponsor of the House bill, stated "Never again will survivors and responders be forced to walk the halls of Congress, begging for their health care. Congress has taken bipartisan action to do right by the heroes of 9/11."



"Today is a victory for the responders and survivors of September 11 and for the allies who have fought alongside us for years to reach this moment," said **Congressman Jerrold Nadler** (D-NY).

"We stood together as a great nation on that horrific day and we stand together today. The 9/11 responders and survivors, including many members of organized labor, who still suffer as a result of their bravery and determination will receive the care and support they deserve." - **Mario Cilento, President of the NYS AFL-CIO**



For more please see the following press release from the leading New York Congressional sponsors of the Zadroga Act extension (Click [HERE](#)).

The BALCONY Infrastructure Initiative



As you are hopefully aware **BALCONY** began an Infrastructure Initiative early in 2015 as a way to bring together influential organizations and individuals to address the deteriorating state of infrastructure in New York State. The coalition is composed of policy makers, union leaders, advocates and experts, representatives of environmental and consumer groups, and sponsors of proposed infrastructure projects. Our primary objectives are to raise awareness, increase political will, and encourage dialogue between the key business and labor groups in order to address the deplorable state of infrastructure in our state. The mission statement can be read [HERE](#) and a list of our committee members is available [HERE](#).

THE GATEWAY PROJECT: 10 years \$20 Billion



Image from Amtrak

*"**BALCONY** strongly supports the Gateway project and we encourage our members to rally behind it. We believe the creation of the new cross-Hudson tunnels are essential to growing and maintaining the economic engine of New York." - Lou Gordon, **BALCONY** Director*

THE BALCONY INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVE GATEWAY BREAKFAST FORUM

On Friday November 13, 2015 the **Business and Labor Coalition of New York (BALCONY) Infrastructure Initiative** hosted a "**Gateway Project Breakfast Forum**" that featured **Keynote Speaker Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY)** and other experts and advocates to discuss and build support and advocacy for the Gateway project and infrastructure investment in New York and New Jersey. The forum came just one day after a momentous announcement by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY), Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) and U.S. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx regarding the creation of a **Gateway Development Corporation** to oversee the 10 year \$20 billion Gateway project. The Gateway Development Corporation will see the cost of the project split 50/50 between the states and the Federal Government and Amtrak under the direction of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.



(From Left to Right) Barbara Armand, President of Professional Women in Construction; Lou Coletti, President and CEO of the Building Trades Employers Association; Lou Gordon, Director of BALCONY; Stephen C.F. Anderson, Founder of InfrastructureUSA.org; Mark Jaffe, President and CEO of The Greater New York Chamber of Commerce; U.S. Congressman Jerrold Nadler; Denise Richardson, Executive Director of the General Contractors Association; Petra Messick, Infrastructure Planning Manager of Amtrak

The **BALCONY** event was attended by over 150 members of the business, labor, and political communities, including **State Senator Adriano Espaillat** and former **State Senator Fred Ohrenstein**.

TO VIEW THE BALCONY GATEWAY FORUM VIDEO REPORT PLEASE CLICK [HERE](#)

For more information on Gateway we also recommend this educational video from the Regional Plan Association (RPA) on the importance, scope and aims of the project.



Regional Plan Association

<https://vimeo.com/143811940>

New York Infrastructure

In addition to the GATEWAY Project, New York State is considering, and embarking on, numerous key infrastructure initiatives that range from restoring the Tappan Zee Bridge and the renovation of Penn Station, to finding a way to address the critically underfunded MTA. On Wednesday, January 6th, Governor Cuomo proposed spending \$22 billion to improve roads and bridges.





Governor Cuomo Addressing New York's Infrastructure Needs (1/6/2016)

For an update on the status of the most important infrastructure projects in NYS currently being considered and/or funded please click [HERE](#)

Education: Common Core Contested and the Implications of Friedrichs v. California

Defending, promoting, and improving public education in New York State has long been a central issue for **BALCONY**. It is critical that pro-public school voices from the business community be heard on this cause.

Task Force Reports Common Core Let Students and Teachers Down



Chaired by Richard Parsons, the Common Core Task force was created by Governor Cuomo and was charged with reviewing and reform the controversial Common Core State Standards. Citing "disruption and anxiety" caused by the flawed rollout of the program the Governor asked the task force to engage parents, teachers, students, and others to hear from them what is, and is not, working; review the Standards, the related curriculum, and testing and make recommendations for improving these components to ensure that New York students have the opportunity to receive the highest quality education. The resulting report was intensely critical of the emphasis that the Common Core Standards place on standardized testing and recommended a more holistic approach to education.

To view the NYS Common Core Task Force's report please click [HERE](#)

On Dec. 10, 2015 the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) released a statement supporting the report:

"Today we celebrate momentous developments at the state and national level that open the door for a much needed transformation in public education. The recommendations of the state task force signal a commitment to restore the joy of teaching and learning in our classrooms."

For the full statement please click [HERE](#)

Friedrichs v. California; Public Employee Unions Threatened

The hugely controversial U.S. Supreme Court case *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, for which arguments will be heard in early 2016, has serious implications for the future of collective bargaining and public employee unions across the nation.

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE: The truth about Friedrichs

By Michael Mulgrew, UFT President



"We fought too hard and sacrificed too much to win what we have today - and we will not sit idly by while it is taken from us." - **UFT President Michael Mulgrew**

December 3, 2015

"Let us be clear: *Friedrichs* isn't about the First Amendment; it is about undermining this country's labor unions because we are the last great defenders of working people and the middle class. The far-right forces behind the lawsuit despise unions because it is our collective voice and collective action that prevent them from further enriching themselves at ordinary Americans' expense. They don't just want to abolish agency fees; they want to abolish our unions and undo the decades of progress we have made."

For the full statement please click [HERE](#)

Minimum Wage: Fight for \$15



BALCONY has long been committed to raising the minimum wage, which, at its current level, leaves millions of New Yorkers in poverty, or at best, struggling just to make ends meet.

Our new **BALCONY Co-Chair Andrew Pallotta**, Executive Vice President of the New York State United Teachers, has been vocal in his support of the "Fight for \$15."

On Monday, January 4, 2015 Governor Cuomo launched the Mario Cuomo Campaign for Economic Justice to push for the \$15/hour minimum wage. The announcement came just days before a State Senate session in which the question of whether to pursue the wage increase was near the top of the agenda. The session drew a large crowd of advocates for the increase that included members of business and labor, as well as faith based organizations.

Governor Cuomo's push to raise the minimum wage has won the backing of more than three dozen downstate business leaders. One of the first prominent business members to commit her support was **BALCONY** Executive Board Member, President and CEO of Tigress Financial, and Chairperson of the Greater New York Chamber of Commerce **Cynthia DiBartolo**. DiBartolo recently submitted testimony in support of the proposal saying, "The \$15 minimum wage proposal is a step in the right direction. An increased minimum wage is the right move for businesses and workers alike while preserving the social contract and building a just society." For DiBartolo's full testimony click [HERE](#).



In what we see as an extremely positive development, more and more business leaders and commerce representatives are voicing their support for the Fight for \$15, most recently the head of the Retail Council of New York State, Ted Potrikus who was just named a vice chairman of the Mario Cuomo Campaign for Economic Justice.

For more click [HERE](#)

Health Care: The Affordable Care Act Under Fire and the Need to Bolster Workers Safety



BALCONY has long been an advocate of universal health care. In fact, in 2010, Kathleen Sebelius, then United States Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, made **BALCONY**'s event on affordable health care her first appearance after the Affordable Care Act was signed by President Barack Obama. **BALCONY** continues to believe that the Affordable Care Act, which enrolled 11.7 million Americans in 2015 and 17.6 million Americans to date (according to a September report from HHS), represents a critical step forward in the struggle to ensure all Americans have adequate health care and urge our members to support it going forward.

As you are likely aware the Affordable Care Act has been under considerable attack in 2015. One of the most insidious attempts to undermine the Act are efforts (led in large part by Republican Senator Marco Rubio) against the risk corridor provision of the health care law which protects insurance companies from losses they may sustain as a consequence of signing on to the exchange. The end result is distrust and animosity between insurance carriers and the federal government and diminished enthusiasm and incentive for carriers to join the exchange.

Workers' Health and Safety

As New York prepares to move forward with several major infrastructure and construction projects in 2016 including the \$20 billion Gateway Tunnel Project thousands of construction workers will be employed in dangerous and potentially life-threatening positions. **BALCONY** is committed to ensuring



that every precaution is taken to ensure that those employed are both qualified and well-trained. Working alongside our partners and members, including Mt. Sinai's Selikoff Center we hope to ensure that the safety of workers remains paramount as these projects proceed.

A recent report of particular note comes from the New York Times and raises serious questions about the ethics and efficacy of employing non-union labor and the general lack of oversight that leads to worker fatalities, which disproportionately affect the poor and undocumented.

The New York Times

Safety Lapses and Deaths amid a Building Boom in New York

By David Chen
November 26, 2015

The rise in deaths and injuries - mostly among undocumented immigrant laborers - far exceeds the rate of new construction. A review of every construction fatality in the past two years by The New York Times has found that many could have been, as a federal investigation into one accident put it, "completely avoidable." They usually involved smaller projects, using nonunion workers, who were often poorly trained.

For the full report please click [HERE](#)

BALCONY Member Mount Sinai Selikoff Centers for Occupational Health Continues to Fight for Workers Safety

"The Mount Sinai Selikoff Centers for Occupational Health are widely recognized as leaders in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of workplace injuries and illnesses. Our multidisciplinary health care team includes physicians, nurse practitioners, industrial hygienists, ergonomists, social workers and benefits specialists, who provide comprehensive patient-centered services.



"We also partner with employers and unions to assess and reduce risk factors in work environments and to establish comprehensive occupational health and safety programs designed to encourage a safe, healthful and productive workplace. Medical providers are encouraged to consult with our team when injuries and illnesses may be work related. With a focus on prevention, we strive to keep workers healthy and their workplaces safe."

Affordable Housing in New York: AFL-CIO HIT \$1 Billion Investment in NYC

At **BALCONY** we believe addressing the affordable housing crisis in New York is of critical importance. In February of 2015 **BALCONY** hosted a forum with **NYC Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Vicki Been** and **NYS Homes and Community Renewal Commissioner and CEO Darryl Towns**. Even as NYC Mayor De Blasio's dream of a \$41 billion ten-year affordable housing plan for New York City (especially his recent zoning proposals) has come under increasing criticism from community boards and interest groups there is reason to be optimistic. A \$1 billion AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust (HIT) investment in affordable housing in NYC and other developments make it very clear that the political will to attack this crisis is there, even if navigating the political terrain and actual logistics still presents an enormous obstacle. Among the key questions that **BALCONY** will continue to monitor are (the still vague framework of) 421(a) tax credits - used to lure developers to build low-income housing, projections for long term-employment opportunities (especially in construction), and a resolution on the question of guaranteed project labor agreements (PLA's).

AFL-CIO HIT Investment

In November \$1 Billion for NYC Affordable Housing was allocated by the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust (HIT) and New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer pledged to invest \$150 million of NYC pension funds into the trust. More recently the AFL-CIO HIT joined forces with the United Clergy Task Force and announced plans to invest \$300 million to build affordable housing and community centers in NYC.

LABORPRESS

Labor-Church Coalition Announces \$300M Housing Plan

By Steven Wishnia
December 14, 2015

Can an alliance of carpenters and churches help solve New York City's housing crisis?



NY Building Trades President Gary LaBarbera signs affordable housing compact.

That was the hope expressed at Riverside Church Dec. 12, when the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust and the United Clergy Task Force, a coalition of religious institutions and labor unions, announced plans to invest \$300 million to build affordable housing and community facilities at seven sites in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Jersey City. The projects are expected to create more than 800 apartments, 1,400 union jobs, and apprenticeships for neighborhood residents.

For the full article please click [HERE](#)

FALL EVENTS RECAP

2015 Golf Outing

BALCONY 2015 Golf Outing Honors NYS AFL-CIO President Mario Cilento

October 26, 2015

BALCONY Golf Outing Honors NYS AFL-CIO President Mario Cilento



Mario Cilento, President of NYS AFL-CIO



Andrew Pallotta, Executive Vice-President, NYSUT

On October 26th the **Business and Labor Coalition of New York (BALCONY)** hosted its **fifth annual Golf Outing at Normanside Country Club** outside of Albany featuring keynote speaker **Mario Cilento, President of the NYS AFL-CIO**. 95 golfers representing business and labor organizations from across New York State played in foursomes on an 18 hole scramble that culminated with a cocktail reception and awards dinner. In his keynote speech Mr. Cilento spoke about the importance of revitalizing labor in New York State and the

key role that business will have to play in realizing that goal. Of **BALCONY** he said *"bringing labor and business together in new ways that challenge the antagonism that has traditionally characterized the relationship between the two is a necessary and noble mission. I am pleased to be recognized at this event."*

Also prominent at the event was newly appointed **BALCONY Labor Co-Chair Andrew Pallotta, the Executive Vice President of the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT)**. According to Mr. Pallotta *"I couldn't be happier with the incredible turnout for this event, it truly demonstrates the enormous will and commitment of New Yorkers to find common ground between business and labor to the benefit of all. I am also so pleased that we have Mr. Cilento here, a man who has done so much for the labor movement."*



BALCONY Director Lou Gordon

BALCONY Director Lou Gordon thanked both men for their presence and support of **BALCONY's** mission, ending his speech on a humorous note saying, "I hope to improve on my golf game so maybe next year I can be on a foursome that finally wins our tournament!"

BALCONY hosts forum with CBS Radio on the 2016 Political Landscape featuring NYC Public Advocate Letitia James

December 3rd, 2015

On Thursday, December 3rd, the **Business and Labor Coalition of New York (BALCONY)** co-hosted an inaugural event with **WCBS Radio** that featured an interview with **NYC Public Advocate Letitia James** by WCBS news anchor Steve Scott on the 2016 Political Landscape. The forum, which opened with an introduction by **BALCONY Director Lou Gordon**, was a great success and **BALCONY** looks forward to co-hosting more forums of this nature with WCBS in the future, both in Albany and NYC.



BALCONY Director Lou Gordon, NYC Public Advocate Letitia James, WCBS News Anchor Steve Scott

This forum was hosted at WCBS's newly opened Adorama theatre. Public Advocate James spoke about a variety of issues facing New York City including congestion pricing and a \$15 minimum wage, for which she has been a strong advocate, as well as the importance of funding and improving NYC's foster care system, education, infrastructure, and the Mayor's affordable housing plan.

"I look forward to doing whatever I can in my capacity to bridge divides and to work together so that we can formulate an agenda which works to the benefit of all New Yorkers." - **Letitia James, NYC Public Advocate**



GNYCC President Mark Jaffe, NYC Public Advocate Letitia James, BALCONY Board Member and CEO of Tigress Financial Cynthia DiBartolo

BALCONY MEMBER DIRECTORY



(Click [HERE](#) for the PDF version of the Membership Directory by Sector)

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 **dCLS**[®]
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BALCONY New York
4 West 43rd Street, Suite 405
New York, NY 10036
www.balconynewyork.com (212) 219-7777

Lou Gordon, Director
loug@balconynewyork.com

BALCONY, THE BUSINESS AND LABOR COALITION OF NEW YORK

Andy Pallotta, BALCONY Labor Co-Chair & NYSUT Executive Vice President
Alan Lubin, BALCONY Founder & Chairman Emeritus

Executive Board

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Mark Jaffe, Greater New York Chamber of Commerce
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