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## BUDGET UPDATE



March 7, 2016

Dear Friends,

In January **NYS Governor Andrew Cuomo** presented the **NYS Executive Budget** and **NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio** presented his **budget for New York City**. The Governor's budget included some very exciting line items and an overall progressive and ambitious agenda. In particular **BALCONY** was thrilled to see a \$100 billion proposal for a statewide infrastructure capital plan. We are also excited by the Governor's commitment to raising the State's minimum wage to \$15/hour. There are many areas of concern, including large cuts in funding for CUNY and SUNY. **BALCONY** is also concerned that the Governor did little to address outdated and constricting austerity measures like the 2% tax cap while, at the same time, proposing expansive long-term spending increases.

The following is a brief report on key issues of the NYS and NYC budgets. We have also included a list of upcoming **BALCONY** member events - we hope to see you there! Finally we would like to thank our friends at the **Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI)** for their outstanding work analyzing the NYS and NYC budgets and encourage our members to download the **FPI New York State Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2016-2017 "A Shared Opportunity Agenda"** [HERE](#).



**B ALCONY** is pleased to announce our latest Executive Board Member, **Sarah Biser, Partner at McCarter & English!** Sarah was a founding member of the **BALCONY Infrastructure Initiative**. We are thrilled to have her leadership and look forward to her guidance and expertise.

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## NYS Minimum Wage: The Fight for \$15



**BALCONY** has long been committed to raising the minimum wage to \$15/hour, which, at its current level, leaves millions of New Yorkers in poverty, or at best, struggling just to make ends meet.



**BALCONY Co-Chair and Executive Vice President of the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) Andrew Pallotta** testified to the NYS Legislature in February in support of the Governor's proposal, saying, "NYSUT fully supports the Executive Budget proposal to increase the state's minimum wage to \$15 dollars an hour. We hope that the proposal will be amended to include all state and municipal employees. Excluding these important members of our workforce from this wage adjustment would create a two-tiered minimum wage system in our state and would send the wrong message to workers."

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](#)

***Last week, the New York Times endorsed Governor Cuomo's "smart and sensible" plan to raise the minimum wage to \$15/hour.***

**The New York Times**

The Editorial Board

March 4, 2016

The lowest-wage workers in New York could soon get a much-needed raise - if the stingy Republicans who control the State Senate don't block it.

Legislators in Albany are supposed to vote by April 1 on the latest state budget from Gov. Andrew Cuomo, which includes a strong and sensible provision to raise the state minimum wage. Under the proposal, the minimum in New York City would rise from \$9 an hour now to \$15 by the end of 2018; elsewhere in the state, it would rise to \$15 by mid-2021.

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

## EDUCATION



### Funding our Public Schools

Ensuring that all of our students enjoy access to critical resources in the classroom remains a major **BALCONY** priority.

In early February **BALCONY Co-Chair and Executive Vice President of the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) Andy Pallotta** gave testimony to the NYS Legislature.

He emphasized the need to protect and fund public education, saying:

"We must continue to work together to ensure each and every student receives a high quality education that prepares them for college and career.

We must continue to work towards reducing unnecessary testing in our schools.

We must restore the joy of learning and teaching in our classrooms."

He was also critical of the Executive Budget proposal on charter schools, advocated for Pre-K expansion, funding for special education

NYSUT is also calling for an increase of \$2.6 billion in general purpose school aid.

For his full testimony please click [HERE](#)

The Governor has proposed an increase of \$1 billion in school aid, however this number falls far short of the \$4.4 billion still owed to NYC public schools in Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) funding.

The CFE was a lawsuit brought by NYC parents against the State of New York over a decade ago. These parents charged the State with failing to provide NYC public school students with an adequate education.

### **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.

The hugely controversial U.S. Supreme Court case Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association has serious implications for the future of collective bargaining and public employee unions across the nation.

The recent news of the passing of Supreme Court Justice Scalia has cast doubt on the status of the Friedrichs case. Pending the confirmation of a new Supreme Court Justice the case will remain in limbo. And appears to be a victory for the teachers.

What is certain is that the future of collective bargaining is at stake.



For more, we encourage you to read the following article from Atlantic published February 17th

[Click HERE](#)

## The Fight for Public Higher Education Funding



*Barbara Bowen, President, PSC*



Dave Sanders

### **BALCONY Supports PSC Struggle to Fight \$485 Million in Cuts to CUNY Schools**

The Business and Labor Coalition of New York (**BALCONY**) is joining **Professional Staff Congress (PSC) President Barbara Bowen** in condemning NYS Governor Andrew Cuomo's 2016-2017 Executive Budget for continuing a systematic "pattern of disinvestment" in CUNY schools. In particular **BALCONY** supports Ms. Bowen's opposition to the Governor's proposal to cut \$485 million in state funding to CUNY, which, Ms. Bowen has asserted, "represents a political decision to shortchange the students."

The burden of compensating for the nearly half-billion dollars the Governor proposes to cut from the state's CUNY funding would fall on New York City, an encumbrance that is compounded by the Governor's proposal that the city also take on greater fiscal responsibility for Medicaid costs and sales tax revenues.

**Tell Governor Cuomo to Invest in Education for 500,000 CUNY Students! Click [HERE](#)**

In early February **BALCONY** Co-Chair and Executive Vice President of the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) Andy Pallotta gave testimony to the NYS Legislature.

For his full testimony please click [HERE](#)

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Governor Cuomo's \$100 Billion Capital Plan**



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](#).

The **Infrastructure Initiative** is led by **Joyce Miller of Tier One Strategies, Michael Locker of Locker Associates, David Pollak of Pegasus Capital, and Sarah Biser of McCarter & English LLP.**

A list of our committee members is available [HERE](#).

A major funding initiative unveiled in Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget was a proposed \$100 Billion Capital Infrastructure Plan. The proposed infrastructure investment would go towards funding over a dozen critical infrastructure projects across the state.

**To view a chart of all proposed NYS Capital Investment Plan Projects please click [HERE](#).**



On January 26th long time **BALCONY** friend, member and chairman of the **New York AREA (The New York Affordable Reliable Electricity Alliance)**, **Jerry Kremer** published an article in "The Island Now," praising Governor Cuomo's commitment to major mass transit projects, even comparing him to the late great city planner Robert Moses.

Below is a brief excerpt:

"It is very clear that New York State can't do everything for everyone when it comes to roads, bridges and tunnels.

But the governor's bold promise to get some major projects done in the near future is good news for all of us.

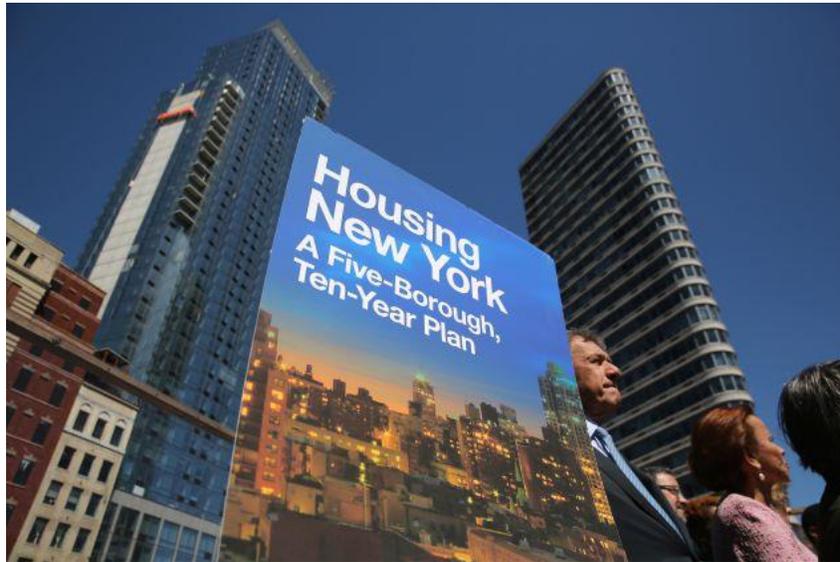
The governor's parting statement at the Long Island Association (LIA) event says it all.

"NIMBY and the shortcomings of the bureaucracy have stolen our capacity for major projects. If we lived like this and worked like this we wouldn't be here. Long Island wouldn't be here. You would all be potato farmers."

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

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

### Mayor's Plan Seems Likely to Pass, 421-a Expires



**Stuart Appelbaum,**  
**BALCONY** Member  
and President of the Retail, Wholesale  
and Department Store Union

### *Unions Mount Effort to Push de Blasio Housing Plan Over the Finish Line*

Politically powerful labor groups urge City Council members to approve the mayor's proposals, saying their members would benefit.

March 3, 2016

By Rosa Goldensohn

Leaders from six of the city's most muscular unions will send letters to City Council members Thursday urging them to support the mayor's zoning amendments, and saying they will create housing their members can afford.

"Like many other New Yorkers, members of 1199 SEIU, SEIU 32BJ, CWA District 1, DC 37, HTC, and RWDSU are increasingly forced to live far outside of the city we work in or pay rents we can't afford," the letter says, referring to unions representing workers in health care, building services, communications, clerical positions and retail, respectively. "Our members will be among the hundreds of thousands of working New Yorkers who will directly benefit from this desperately needed housing plan."

It is signed by **George Gresham, president of the healthcare union 1199; Hector Figueroa from SEIU 32BJ; Peter Ward from the Hotel Trades Council; Henry Garrido from DC 37; Stuart Appelbaum from the retail workers' union; and Dennis Trainor, who represents the Communications Workers of America.**

For more click [HERE](#)



Building and  
Construction  
Trades Council

**Gary LaBerbera, President of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York**

was the lead labor negotiator for the now-expired development tax break known as 421-a.

"Unfortunately, despite a good faith effort by all parties, REBNY (the Real Estate Board of New York) and the Building Trades were unable to come to a final agreement on the renewal of a 421-a program that would provide good wages to construction workers across the city. We remain ready to engage with all stakeholders in the weeks and months ahead to achieve our goals of creating needed affordable housing and middle class jobs for New Yorkers."

## BALCONY SUPPORTS THE PAID FAMILY LEAVE ACT



### **Business Leaders Support NY Governor's Plan for Paid Family Leave, Note No Costs for Employers in Proposal**

On February 2nd **BALCONY** member **American Sustainable Business Council** released a statement in support of paid family leave featuring quotes from prominent individuals in the business community as well as other influential advocates including **BALCONY Director Lou Gordon**.

Business leaders in NY State expressed support for Governor Cuomo's paid leave proposal contained in the 30-Day Budget Amendments. The proposal will guarantee low-wage workers and middle-income families access to a benefit currently available only to employees of generous companies. Costs under the proposal are to be paid by employees, with no costs to businesses. The business leaders believe the benefit is important for the state's economy and call on the legislature to pass the proposal.

**Lou Gordon, Director of the Business and Labor Coalition of New York (BALCONY)**, said, "More than ever, employment practices are out of pace with working families. Today the majority of parents of young children both men and women, work. Trends show that these working families are also increasingly responsible for elderly or disabled relatives. Without a paid family leave policy, young parents often feel forced to return to work before their children are ready to be without a parent. **The Business and Labor Coalition of New York (BALCONY)** supports passage of paid family leave for New Yorkers."

For the full statement click [HERE](#)

### **MT SINAI SELIKOFF CENTER OFFERS DIESEL STUDY FOR MT VERNON**



**DR. ROBERTO LUCCHINI, Director of the Division of Occupation Medicine at Mt Sinai Selikoff Center For Occupational Medicine (l) meets with Mt Vernon Mayor Richard Thomas( c) and BALCONY Director Lou Gordon (r) to discuss a study of the impact of diesel emissions on City Workers and residents.**

## **BALCONY SUPPORTS RETIREMENT SECURITY FOR ALL**



Long time **BALCONY** member and friend **Bill Samuels** has pioneered a campaign for a private sector retirement savings program in NYS and NYC.

TO VIEW THE PLAN PLEASE CLICK [HERE](#)

About a month after **New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio** announced plans for the nation's first city-run retirement savings program for private sector employees, several city officials and AARP members joined him in praising the proposal as a pioneering move.

NYC Mayor de Blasio and his colleagues have outlined plans for the so-called Security for All New Yorkers program.

"We're going to be the first city in the country to create a retirement savings program because our people need it right now," de Blasio said Thursday. "She [my mother] was working for Polaroid Corporation for the last decade or more of her career, and she called up one day in her retirement, and she said, 'I got a letter and my pension has been canceled' ... Social Security, thank God, provides something, but it doesn't provide - in many people's cases - enough resources, certainly not in a city with the kind of costs we have."

## **BALCONY JOINS UNIONS IN OPPOSING NYC COUNCIL'S PROGRAM TO ELIMINATE THE GAP**

**BALCONY** has joined many of our union members in opposing the New York City Council's push to reduce city agency budgets by 5%.

**BALCONY Director Lou Gordon** said he was "especially concerned about the impact the potential cuts would have on women and minorities who make up the majority of employees who would be affected."

## Unions Knock New York City Council's PEG Push



**Arthur Cheliotis**  
**BALCONY Member;**  
**President, CWA Local 1180**

A number of unions, including **BALCONY** member the **Communication Workers of America Local 1180** and progressive groups have written a letter to 25 New York City Council members saying they were "disappointed" that the lawmakers urged Mayor Bill de Blasio to cut NYC agency budgets by 5%.

The memo was signed by DC 37, which represents municipal workers, 32BJ, which represents building service personnel, the New York Hotel and Motel Trades Council, the Working Families Party, the Fiscal Policy Institute, Communication Workers of America and Vocal New York. The groups also noted that the mayor embarked on a "significant increase in the police force" because it was requested by the Council.

## UPCOMING BALCONY MEMBER EVENTS





## FPI's NYC Budget Briefing

Thursday, March 10 from 10:00 am to 11:30 am  
at the Federation for Protestant Welfare Agencies

at 281 Park Ave S, New York, NY

To register click [here](#)



## Healthcare Construction Forum

March 15th, 2016

Steelcase Showroom, 4 Columbus Circle, 7th Floor, New  
York, NY 10019

Register Here: [Buy Tickets](#)



## Fight for \$15: March on Albany

Tuesday, March 15, 12 pm

Join thousands of workers from across the state as they [converge on the Capitol Building in Albany](#), NY to demand a \$15 minimum wage.



## **Greater New York Chamber of Commerce Women's History Month Forum**

March 18th @ 8.30AM-10.30AM

Hard Rock Cafe  
1501 Broadway, Times Square NYC

COST: \$25 for members / \$40 non members

For more information please call 212-686-7220

To register click [\*\*HERE\*\*](#)

**AFL-CIO  
NEW YORK CITY  
CENTRAL LABOR  
COUNCIL**

## **105th Commemoration of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire**

Wednesday, March 23, 11:30 am

Join the Workers United, the NYC CLC, the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition and other labor and community groups as we remember the lives that were lost during the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire.

146 lives were lost that day, but the workers - many of them young women-did not die in vain, as the tragedy laid the groundwork for many of the labor laws and regulations that help protect workers today.

Please share the event with your friends, family and coworkers on [\*\*Facebook\*\*](#).



**NYC Central Labor Council Annual Awards Reception, honoring Greg Floyd, President, IBT Local 237**

Tuesday, April 12, 2016 from 6.00 pm-8.30 pm

To register click [HERE](#)



**Community  
Healthcare  
Network**

**Community Healthcare Network's  
Spring Soiree**

Tuesday, May 10th @ 6 pm, New York

The Rubin Museum of Art  
150 West 17th St., New York, NY 10011

To register contact [slilavois@chnnyc.org](mailto:slilavois@chnnyc.org)



**NYCOSH Gala 2016 Honors  
U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand**

Thursday, May 12, 2016 @6 pm-9 pm

52 Broadway, New York, NY

For tickets visit [www.nycosh.org/gala](http://www.nycosh.org/gala)

**LABORPRESS** LaborPress Leadership Awards  
EVENTS Reception

June 1st, 2016 5 pm-8 pm

NYC District Council of Carpenters  
395 Hudson St., New York, NY 10004

For more information contact Stephanie West at  
[stephanie@laborpress.org](mailto:stephanie@laborpress.org)

Or click [HERE](#)

**BALCONY MEMBER DIRECTORY**



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

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**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**

**Sarah B. Biser, Chair - Construction, Project Development, and Finance, McCarter & English, LLP**  
**Cynthia D. DiBartolo, Tigress Financial Partners**  
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