

Tom Casey – NY SENATE DETAILED POSITIONS

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Federally Lobby

1. Fair International Trade
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1. **The growth of good-paying jobs requires:**
 - A. Reduction of one of the highest local/state combined taxes in the nation by:
 - 1) *Reducing the Cost of State Government*
 - (a) Budget –Constitutional convention or amendment to require limiting budget increase to a maximum of inflation plus population growth (proposed by Assemblyman Schimminger) or a maximum percentage established by an independent board based on multiple factors (See Citizens Budget Commission recommendation).
-The objective should be increases less than inflation for the coming years.

- On time budgets or last year's budget without inflation is automatic.
- Eliminate all off budget costs, all special budget allocations and any member items not supported by clear objectives and accountability standards.
- Once the lower debt level is achieved and rainy day fund is adequate, return all year end surpluses over 2% to taxpayers (Oregon).
- Balanced budget in accord with Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures (GAAP accrual based) for all government activities (improve recent 2007 required cash basis for General Fund only).
- Independent Budget Office, non-partisan and professional, similar to Federal Congress (not directly Governor or Comptroller controlled, but controlled by independent, equally bipartisan legislative committee):
 - ◆ Binding revenue forecasts for all revenue (not just taxes)
 - ◆ Four year financial impact analysis –GAAP Based
 - ◆ Quarterly budget reports
 - ◆ Accurate projections of the impact on local governments of all State laws and budgets.
- Establish legislative budget committees with power (not advisory as present) and give legislature more power over budget appropriations.
- Provide adequate proposed budget review time. We must end the abuse of the emergency “message of necessity” to allow last minute budgets to be adopted with practically no review time.
- Transparent Budget process, open debate, understandable public information (not a repeat of secret Assembly and not prepared Senate 2007 Budget summary documents or final negotiations).

(b) Debt— Constitutional convention or amendment to establish total debt cap (including all prior incurred debt not as past reform excluded this) equal to 5% of personal income, make debt for operational purposes illegal, eliminate all back-door borrowing and define debt to include all state-funded debt (including Authority NY morally backed bonds). To achieve this debt cap New York must incur less debt than what would typically be allowed annually for a number of years to get our present debt under the limit.

(c) Reducing Cost of Medicaid – Full payment by State. Monitor effectiveness of Medicaid Fraud Inspector, generic drugs (in spite of pharmaceutical lobbyists), reduce hiding of assets for nursing homes, provide alternatives to nursing homes, require managed care, allow counties flexibility in management and benefits (See Chemung) and review if the provided “optional” benefits are comparable to average private sector insurance. Review eligibility guidelines based on income, marriage responsibilities and residency. As soon as possible

health care should be resolved at the Federal level (see Federal lobbying section at end).

- (d) Effectiveness Performance Assessment required of all authorities and State Agencies based on analysis by independent budget office. We must join the 32 states that have enacted management for results legislation.
- (e) Significant Reduction of Member Item Spending to items only with a PROVEN good, long-term job creation impact. Local communities should decide where they raise and spend their own taxes, not look for “free” state money that is not free. Funding such as the \$600,000 for a hockey rink in an upper income suburb, East Aurora (Erie County), that will compete with private sector, taxpaying ice rinks are wrong. Greater dependence on Albany decreases the independence of our local communities and very unreasonably increases incumbents’ power.

2) *Reduce the Cost of State and local governments*

- (a) Pension Reform – establish a commission on pension reform to research and recommend for implementation such items as a new tier, employees must contribute during all time working and no pension increase if the highest three years base salary is increased with overtime, stipends, accumulated sick time or a second government job.
- (b) Amend Labor Laws to make public sector work force compensation comparable to private sector counterparts.
 - Taylor law – reform public sector employee salary arbitration basis from the present comparative public sector salaries and benefits to the government’s ability to pay and comparable private sector compensation. End binding arbitration.
 - Eliminate Tri-Borough amendments that keep existing contracts in force after they expire. Should include ending step increases and freezing monetary value of benefit costs.
 - Reduce State law restrictions on termination’s and discipline for malfeasance or unacceptably poor performance.
 - Allow performance-based compensation to increase raises of higher performers and reduce the raises of poorer performers relative to negotiated average pay raise – manager decides.
 - Carry out cost comparisons of government versus private sector services based on an accounting of the full costs including all overhead and measurable quality/time completion specifications. This is now being requested by NYS Transportation employees. Make provision of the services by the public or private sector feasible for municipalities, agencies and authorities if either can provide the same services for a reduced cost. Examples are garbage collection, social services, education, accounting, roadways, utility and fleet maintenance, and health care.

- 3) *Reduce Cost of Local Governments*
 - (a) Reduce Local Mandates – Medicaid paid 100% by State in exchange for improved local cost efficiencies.
 - (b) Incentives to Regionalize services and merge municipalities if it is proven this will save money.

- B. Reduction of Energy Costs through Public Service Commission regulatory reform based on a committee established to make recommendations for increased competition and efficiency to achieve lower customer costs — Target low cost power to job creating industries — Increase ability of utilities to expand capacity and address transmission bottlenecks — Reclaim the 70 megawatts of Niagara power given to the entire state for its originally intended use within 30 miles of Niagara Falls.

- C. Careful investment of public dollars and tax incentives in strategically planned activities with specific measurable outcomes to create good paying job growth (not “silver-bullet” retail projects that compete with existing retail businesses and create lower-paying retail jobs). I specifically would support, if objectively shown they will create good jobs with associated accountability:
 - Buffalo Metropolitan Area Health Sciences Center (UB 2020)
 - Cultural tourism investments
 - Northeast/Canada Intermodal transportation hub for Buffalo area.

- D. Aggressive business support by responsive, extra-effort, business development agency employees to research and package proposals, and to cut through red tape

2. Increase Legislator Accountability Through Term limits and Competitive Elections

- a) Establish independent (nonpartisan citizen controlled) redistricting commission
- b) Establish term limits — “otherwise playing to the bleachers” per Joe Crangle
- c) Minimal franking (State paid mailings) – for non-biased surveying only and announcement of public meetings
- d) Strict enforcement by Attorney General of no staff work on campaigning during all paid working hours

3. Improve K-12 and Community College Education

- a) The essential ingredient to improved school performance is to increase parent power and freedom to choose their children’s schools with their own taxpayer dollars, thereby empowering ALL public and private school parents to hold their children’s schools directly accountable – Increase charter schools and provide income-based tax credits for all private school parents on sliding scale (See Former U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s 1980 proposed federal law). Vouchers for high school graduates to attend any two-year college of their choice in New York.
- b) For our public schools:

- Remove disruptive students to alternative schools
 - End tenure
 - End seniority based pay increases
 - Allow administrator assignment of all school personnel including teachers which would end seniority rights to select easiest assignments
4. **Voter Initiative** – 750 signatures in each county or 1% of population, whichever is less, to put a bill on general election ballot
 5. **New York Legislative Reforms** – Greatly strengthen recent reforms of no empty seat voting in Assembly and stronger conference committees to improve what the Brennan Report called one of most undemocratic legislatures in the nation.
 - a) No empty seat voting in the Senate
 - b) Make it possible for committees to bring bills to the floor without the Speaker’s or Majority Leader’s permission
 - c) Allow committees to hire staff
 - d) Require committee report for each bill
 - e) Limit member bills to 20 each in Assembly and 30 each in Senate
 - f) Reduce the number of committees and limit membership to three
 - g) All legislators receive equal staff funding
 - h) Reduce overall staff of 3,428 that is more than any State legislature
 6. **Ethics Reform** – Pass an ethics in government law to:
 - a) Establish a permanent, nonpartisan ethics commission
 - b) Limit contributions by contractors
 - c) Ban honoraria
 - d) Require legislators to terminate any employee found working on his or her election during working time, forfeit of election if involved and compensation to taxpayers. Will require strict definition of campaigning including working on public relations which staff work includes routinely.
 7. **Further Lobbying Reform**
 - a) Ex-legislators NEVER allowed to become lobbyists. Government managers/legislative aides must wait 3 years before lobbying or employment by existing New York State contractor/vendor
 - b) Full lobbyist disclosure of who, what projects and issues they lobby; and how much they contribute to candidates and fund raise for candidates (if not successful in eliminating campaign fund-raising and contributions by lobbyists).
 - c) Monitor effectiveness of recently passed procurement lobbying bill
 - d) No political contributions or gifts
 8. **Campaign Finance Reform – End “pay to play”**
 - a) Limit contributions to \$500 per individual, business, union, PAC and all organization contributions plus stronger enforcement.
 - b) Prohibit transferring funds to any other political official’s campaign funds.

- c) Ban all soft money contributions to “housekeeping” or other accounts.
 - d) Only allow campaign funds to be raised 10 months prior to election in legislator’s district. Legislator’s Albany time should be spent legislating not fund raising with lobbyists.
 - e) Require return of all unused campaign funds after election (or contribute to charities) to eliminate “war chests” and use for lobbying after leave office where “War Chest” can be used in exchange for salary (Some consider this a form of money laundering.)
 - f) Eliminate lobbyist campaign contributions and fund raising
 - g) No use of campaign funds for personal purposes
9. **Strengthen Public Authority Accountability and Reduce Number of Authorities**
Strengthen Public Authority Accountability Act of 2005 by making Authority Budget Office independent under Independent Budget Office (not under Governor as presently) and require private sector cost comparison or bidding. Insure debt limits and reduction of subsidiary corporations. Greatly reduce the number of authorities by conversion to functions under county governments or State agencies where possible.
10. **Restrict Gambling and Lottery Expansion** based on numerous harmful impacts to our youth, the poor, local economies, our society and our culture. Reduce Albany’s addiction to gambling revenues.
11. **Strict Crime Enforcement** from street crime, to economy-hurting, pension destroying white collar crime, to abuses of the public trust by public employees that steals tax payer’s dollars – Crime undermines our society and individuals committing it must be strictly punished. I strongly support life without parole for violent and pedophilia criminals. The number one crime reduction program is a good education, available jobs and youth programs. I oppose the death penalty for same reason I am pro-life.
12. **Reduce Sexually Explicit and Violent Media** – Enact State laws where possible and lobby Congress to help families fight the pervasive media message that irresponsible sex is acceptable, if not good, and that violence is an acceptable solution to problems. Strictly criminalize child pornography. In many cases these problems are due to federal laws such as the Communications Decency Act that does not require Internet providers to check the age of users.
13. **Pro-Life** – support rights for the unborn. I believe we do not have the right to stop a beating heart unless it occurs in saving a mother’s life.
14. **Tort Reform**
- a) Reform scaffolding law to eliminate awards to plaintiffs who cause their own injury by not following well-established safety policies, or due to intoxication or drug use.
 - b) Create special health courts (Just as we have for tax, divorce, family, worker’s compensation and bankruptcy courts).

- c) End NYS practice of awarding injured construction workers compensation plus litigation awards, which NY stands alone in allowing.
- d) Do not allow today's standards to be applied to yesterday's products and services.
- e) Enact a sliding fee schedule for awards down to 10% over \$1,000,000 for attorneys.
- f) Eliminate disproportionate payment of liability based on deepest pockets.

15. Establish Interstate Benchmarks for Total State, Upstate Regions and

Downstate- from Mark. W. Beitz, "Creating a More Prosperous New York State"

- a) Four year population growth
- b) Four year personal income growth
- c) Percent of population employed
- d) Percent of population without health insurance
- e) Percent of population living in poverty
- f) Per pupil education cost
- g) High School graduation rates and regents scores (plus 4th and 8th grade national and internationally comparable testing)
- h) Average math and verbal SAT's
- i) Add job growth and average salary/benefits by area

Federally Lobby

1. Fair Trade through international labor and human rights requirements, fair currency valuations and environmental protections
2. Universal Health Care This must be addressed at the national level because of the lack of insurance for millions of working families, the competitive cost to our global businesses versus other countries that pay for health care and the very excessive national cost versus health outcomes/performance compared to other countries. The solution must include: individual choice (power to hold providers accountable), competition that is essential to choice and quality, individual cost-sharing responsibility (income based) for employable persons to insure responsible choices, comparability of services offered and full transparency of costs to the consumer. I support expansion of Children's Health Insurance and an emphasis on prevention of illness based on personal behavior and medical intervention.