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Week in Review

January 29, 2010

Legislative Budget Hearings Underway

The Senate and Assembly kicked off joint hearings this week on Gov. David Paterson's proposed \$134 billion state budget for 2010-11. The hearings on the general government, environment, and higher education portions of the budget came as legislative leaders criticized the spending plan.

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver said he was ready to fight Paterson's cuts. "As part of his plan to close a multi-billion-dollar deficit, this Governor is proposing a higher education budget that is specifically targeted to hit the budgets of low-income and working families," Silver said at a lobbying day event held by the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities.

Paterson's plan also came under fire from New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who testified that the aid reductions would cause thousands of city workers and teachers to lose their jobs. "I regret to say that this budget – which would impose a total of \$1.3 billion in cuts on New York City and leave us with close to 19,000 fewer City employees to perform basic services – utterly fails the test of fairness," Bloomberg told legislators. "And that is why I am here this morning – to tell you that the people of New York are counting on you in the Legislature to help create a budget that is both responsible and equitable. We expect you to hold every budget decision this year to standards of fairness and fundamental reform."

Bloomberg said Paterson's budget protects state agencies and the politically powerful state workforce by shifting cuts to localities. "The executive budget cuts imposed on localities, including New York City, are nearly three times greater than those State agencies would face," Bloomberg said. "For New York City, those cuts amount to \$1.3 billion in the next fiscal year ... So the State is effectively saying to localities: We're going to fix our budget problems by starving your agencies. Let me tell you, the cuts the State's fiscal mess will cause us to make will not sit well with New York City residents – particularly when they realize the State's budget is balanced on our workforce's back to protect the State's own workforce."

Senate leader John Sampson was more measured in his criticism, but summarily rejected Paterson's plan to impose higher taxes on soda and cigarettes. "We'll continue to work toward closing that budget deficit without burdening people of the state of New York with taxes," Sampson told reporters.

In a further manifestation of the divide between Paterson and the leaders, the Senate and Assembly confirmed that they are taking special parliamentary steps in hopes of preventing Paterson from calling any more special sessions. They did not gavel to a close the special session

on Martin Luther King Day called by Paterson to get action on the Race to the Top legislation. They maintain that Paterson cannot call another special session as long as the MLK day session remains open, albeit in recess.

Senate Still Considering Monserrate Issue

Senate leader John Sampson said this week he is still going over the report calling for the Senate to admonish or expel Senator Hiram Monserrate after his conviction in a domestic violence incident.

"At this point in time it's about dealing with my conference, talking to my conference, and once we talk with them we will determine how we will proceed," Sampson told reporters.

This week, Sampson expressed concern that a bad precedent may be set if Monserrate is expelled because of a misdemeanor conviction. Legislators convicted of a felony are automatically removed from office, but there is no similar certain punishment for a lesser offense.

Sampson's concerns are likely magnified by the narrow Democratic majority. Loss of even one seat could make it hard to muster the necessary majority votes to pass anything other than routine bills, since Senate Republicans votes would have to be collected.

Bloomberg Releases \$63.3 Billion Budget Plan

Mayor Michael Bloomberg released a \$63.3 billion budget plan for New York City this week. He said cuts in state aid would mean the loss of thousands of city government worker jobs, including an estimated 8,500 teachers and 3,150 police officers. The plan would also close 20 fire houses and get rid of school nurses from schools with fewer than 300 pupils. After handing out generous pay raises to union workers during his first two terms, Bloomberg said he would ask teachers to take a 2 percent raise rather than the customary 4 percent annual hike.

Senate Republicans Issue Tax Proposal

Senate Republicans released a plan to provide employees with a tax credit to spur hiring. "The plan's centerpiece would reward businesses with a three-year tax credit, averaging between \$2,500 and \$5,000 for every new job created," Republicans said. "It would also eliminate taxes for small businesses and manufacturers that pay the state's corporate franchise tax and roll back the income tax surcharge placed on them last year by Democrats in the budget. It also places a moratorium on new taxes, fees and regulations that are killing private sector job-creation efforts in the state."

Upcoming Events

A LOOK AHEAD

CONSERVATIVE PARTY CONFERENCE: The State Conservative Party opens its 43rd annual conference on Sunday, January 31, 2010 at 12:30 PM in Albany at the Holiday Inn on Wolf Road.

Sunday speakers:

- 12:30 P.M. Opening Remarks ~ State Chairman, Michael R. Long
- 1:00 - 2:00 E. J. McMahon
- 2:00 – 2:30 Eamon Moynihan
- 2:30 - 3:00 Bruce Gyory

- 3:00 - 3:30 John Faso
- 3:30 – 4:00 Donald B. Smith, Putnam County Sheriff
- 4:00 - 4:45 County Executive Maggie Brooks & County Executive Joanie Mahoney
- 4:45 – 5:15 TBA
- 5:15 – 5:35 Chris Collins
- 5:35 – 5:55 Bruce Blakeman
- 5:55 – 6:15 Harry Wilson
- 6:15 – 6:35 M. Myers Mermel

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Monday speakers:

- 9:00 – 9:30 Rick Lazio
- 9:30 - 10:00 Daniel L. Donovan, Staten Island DA
- 10:00 – 10:30 James Calvin
- 10:30 – 11:30 Doug Hoffman - John McLaughlin - Nelson Warfield
- 11:30 – 12:00 David Bossie - Citizens United
- 12:30 - 2:00 Luncheon - Courtyard - Featured Speaker: Judge Andrew Napolitano
- 2:10 – 2:30 Scott Vanderhoef
- 2:30 – 2:50 Steve Levy
- 2:50 – 3:10 David Malpass
- 3:10 – 3:30 Joe DelGuardio
- 3:30 – 4:00 Congressman Chris Lee

BUDGET HEARINGS WEEK 2: Senate and Assembly hearings on Gov. David Paterson's 2010-11 budget continue.

- February 1 – Hearing Room B, 1:00 PM, Taxes, Clinton Freeman (518) 455-5491
- February 2 – Hearing Room B, 10:00 AM, Education, Clinton Freeman (518) 455-5491
- February 3 – Hearing Room B, 9:30 AM, Mental Health, Kristin Rezek (518) 455-2460
- February 3 – Hearing Room B, 1:00 PM, Housing, Clinton Freeman (518) 455-5491

TUESDAY LCA LOB PRESS CONFERENCES:

- 10 a.m. "Home visiting advocates budget response: Winning beginning of NY" Contact: Jenn O'Connor 463-1896 x 31
- 11 a.m. "Federal legislation on home visiting and state advocacy," Home Visiting Coalition, Contact: Andre Eaton 516-883-7480
- Noon "Eating disorder funding" Assemblyman Ortiz, Contact: Linda 455-3821
- 1 p.m. "Charter schools," NYC Charter Schools Center, Contact: Vince Marrone 914-912-0526

SPEECH BY NEW U.S. ATTORNEY: United State Attorney for the Southern District Preet Bharara delivers the Charles Evans Hughes lecture at 6 p.m. Tuesday at a meeting of the New York County Lawyers Association, 14 Vesey Street, NYC

WEDNESDAY LCA LOB PRESS CONFERENCES:

- 11 a.m. "Cut military budget to resolve state budget deficit," Coalition of peace groups and hunger action, Mark Dunlea 212-741-8192

SPEECH BY LABOR LEADER OTT: Ed Ott, Former Executive Director of the NYC Central Labor Council, speaks at 7 p.m. Wednesday to the Queens County Young Democrats at the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) Local 808 22-43 Jackson Avenue, Long Island City, Queens

THURSDAY LCA LOB PRESS CONFERENCES:

- 11 am. "Mercury report," NYPIRG, Contact: Laura Haight 436-0876

LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- Wednesday 11 a.m., Joint - Senate Standing Committee on Investigation and Government Operations and Senate Standing Committee on Racing, Gaming and Wagering, "Thoroughbred racing in New York as it compares to other states," Elmont Memorial Library, 700 Hempstead Turnpike, Elmont, New York
- Thursday 10 a.m, Senate Standing Committee on Insurance, "No-fault Fraud in New York State," Van Buren Hearing Room A, Legislative Office Building, 2nd Floor, Albany, New York

HEALTH DEPARTMENT MEETINGS:

- Thursday, February 4, 2010 – The Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Advisory Board will meet on February 4 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Empire State Plaza, Concourse Level, Conference Room 125, Albany. The Board is advisory to the Commissioner of Health on tobacco use prevention and control issues, including methods to prevent and reduce tobacco use in the State. For further information, or to attend the meeting, please call Jeffrey Willett at (518) 474-1515.
- Thursday, February 4, 2010 – The State Hospital Review and Planning Council will meet on February 4 at 10:00 a.m. at the New York State Department of Health, 90 Church Street, 4th

Floor, Rooms 4E03 & 4E04, New York, New York. The purpose of the meeting is to consider final action on amendments to State reimbursement rules and the State Hospital Code and to make recommendations on applications for the establishment and/or construction of health care facilities. The 31-member Council, appointed by the Governor, is responsible under the Public Health Law for developing operating standards for hospitals, nursing homes and other health care facilities. It also makes recommendations on applications for establishment of new health facilities and other matters pertaining to health care institutions. For security purposes, all those attending the meeting must provide photo identification at the security desk. To be placed on the security list, please e-mail Lisa Thomson by Tuesday, February 2 at lat02@health.state.ny.us