



Highlights of Governor Cuomo's 2017 State of the State Address

During his regional State of the State addresses, the Governor offered [35 proposals](#). As soon as more details are released on each one, the Chamber will review them. Until then, the Chamber's general positions on several key proposals of particular importance to the Capital Region are provided below.

[Proposal 1: Make College Tuition-Free for New York's Middle Class Families](#)

The Chamber agrees with the Governor that the state must ensure students statewide, regardless of their socio-economic status, have the opportunity to receive a quality education and gain the skills they need to succeed in our global economy. The annual cost of this proposal is estimated to be at least \$163 million. It is unclear how this program would be funded. The Chamber is concerned that this proposal completely excludes private colleges and universities. This is unacceptable, as the Capital Region is well-served by many fine private institutions that have a long history of educating our region's students regardless of their economic status. In addition, if the Governor wants to ensure that students statewide, regardless of their socio-economic status, have the opportunity to receive a quality education, the Chamber believes that the state would be better served by focusing its attention on equitable K-12 school funding. Free tuition will be meaningless to those students in our underfunded school districts which also have high poverty rates. Far too many of these students do not receive an education that would allow them to be college- and career- ready. The Chamber submitted a [pilot proposal](#) to the Governor which would address this issue for the Albany, Schenectady and Troy city school districts.

[MORE](#)

[Proposal 13: Expand After-School Education to Children in High-Need Areas Across the State](#)

This proposal would provide \$35 million for a pilot program to create 22,000 new after-school slots in high-need areas across the state. While the Chamber supports investments in programs that result in higher academic outcomes for all, it is unfortunate that this proposal only focuses on 16 cities that are part of the state's Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative. The Chamber continues to believe that it was a mistake not to include the city of Schenectady in the original poverty reduction initiative. Going forward, the Chamber urges the Governor and the Legislature to include the city of Schenectady in any and all such programs.

[MORE](#)

Proposal 17: Invest \$2 Billion in Clean Water Infrastructure and Water Quality Protection

The Chamber agrees that the state must invest in our often overlooked water infrastructure. Our economy and our communities cannot thrive and grow without addressing our most basic needs. The Chamber will continue its efforts to ensure that the state provides this long-overdue funding.

MORE 

Proposal 18: Enabling Access to Ridesharing throughout New York State

The Chamber agrees with the Governor that ridesharing must be available in Upstate New York. The Chamber has been a strong and vocal advocate on this issue. In fact, bringing ridesharing, like Uber and Lyft, to Upstate is the Chamber's number-one priority for 2017. We will fight to make ridesharing a reality in Upstate. The Legislature must take action immediately, and we will fight any attempts at delay.

MORE 

Proposal 23: Empower Voters to Reduce Property Taxes and Costs of Local Government

The Chamber agrees with the Governor that the property tax burden on residents and businesses must be reduced. For this reason, we have advocated for a permanent property tax cap coupled with meaningful mandate relief. In order to further reduce property taxes, instead of the Governor's proposal, we suggest that the state focus its attention on the following proposals which the Chamber has long supported: Reforming the Scaffold Law; reforming and improving the works' compensation system; repealing the Wicks Law; and providing fair and equitable state funding to all school districts.

Not unlike businesses in New York State, our local governments face far too many state regulations and unfunded state mandates which drive up costs. The Chamber believes that it is an absolute necessity to provide municipal governments with appropriate state aid and mandate relief. By reducing regulations and unfunded mandates, the state can provide our local governments with a real and viable opportunity to lower property taxes. In the end, doing so will reduce the burden on local governments, businesses and taxpayers alike.

MORE 