

Legislative & Political Update



What Happens Next?

We sent you a preliminary analysis of the governor's State of the State address and his executive budget. NYSUT's Legislative and Political Department will aggressively lobby against the governor's misguided, unfounded, public school-busting, billionaire-backed proposals.

If you haven't done so already, please schedule visits to meet with your elected state officials regarding NYSUT's Emergency In-District Committee of 100 on February 12-13.

As you are assisting the Board of Directors with the planning of local forums, actions and other events, please use the form emailed to you to keep us informed so that we can provide support as needed. For template fliers, letters, petitions and other tools, please see www.nysut.org/allkidsneed

State of the State Reactions

Below are the reactions of NYSUT and various coalition partners to Governor Cuomo's State of the State address and his executive budget:

<http://www.nysut.org/news/2015/january/in-state-of-the-state-address-cuomo-misrepresents-reality-of-public-education-in-new-york-state>

<http://nysptapresident.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.aqeny.org/2015/01/release-gov-cuomo-slams-the-door-on-opportunity/>

<http://citizenactionny.org/2015/01/cuomo-agenda-missed-opportunity-address-systemic-inequality/16932>

<http://www.nyssba.org/news/2015/01/21/press-releases/statement-of-nyssba-executive-director-timothy-g.-kremer-on-state-of-the-state-budget/>

<http://www.nycommunities.org/node/1676>

Governor's Assault on Teacher Preparation Programs

Governor Cuomo has proposed legislation in his executive budget that will provide new penalties for teacher preparation programs. The proposal would deregister any teacher preparation programs where fifty percent of the students have failed a teacher certification program for three consecutive years. This proposal, coupled with new NYSED requirements for teacher prep programs, would set SUNY/CUNY programs and their students up for failure.

NYSED has completely botched the implementation of these new certification requirements (this is analogous to their

ACTIONS OF THE WEEK

Call your State Senator and deliver a critical message in support of our public schools here:
https://mac.nysut.org/calllegislators/widget/issue/272#issuesheadline_mobile

Join the fight! Text **nysut to 38470** for MAC text alerts and get breaking news, legislative updates and critical action alerts that will help you help us win this war!



handling of the common core) and refuses to address serious content problems. In addition, these penalties may be unfairly assessed based on SED's inaccurate test results data.

NYSUT, together with its higher education affiliates, will fight strongly against this proposal.

The People's State of the State

On the eve of the governor's State of the State address, advocate groups and unions, including NYSUT, PEF, New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness and the Labor Religion Coalition, called on Governor Cuomo to act on the following issues: increases to state aid for education; a \$15 per hour minimum wage; single payer health care for all New Yorkers; and several other issues important to middle class and low-wage workers across the state.

The purpose behind the noon-time rally was to draw attention to issues which historically get little-to-no mention in the governor's speech namely: hunger, poverty, homelessness, and equity in funding of public education.

Voucher Legislation

Right before the governor's State of the State speech, the Senate passed the Education Investment Tax Credit (EITC) bill, S.1976 (Golden). The legislation passed with 44 "aye" votes, 16 "no" votes and 3 excused absences (Parker, Libous and Larkin). The senators who voted "no" were: Breslin, Comrie, Espallat, Gianaris, Hamilton, Hoylman, Krueger, Montgomery, Panepinto, Peralta, Perkins, Rivera, Sanders, Serrano, Squadron and Stavisky. If your senator is one of those who voted "no" to this voucher scheme, please call and thank them at 518-455-2800.

The Senate bill does not have a "same as" in the Assembly. However, a similar bill (A.2551) was re-introduced by

Legislative Update is written by NYSUT's Legislative Department.

Any questions can be referred to this department at:

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Assemblyman Cusick last week which is also included in the executive budget.

We continue to strongly oppose passage of this legislation. NYSUT's Legislative and Political Department is working with a coalition of groups who also oppose the EITC.

Increase Funding for Public Education

The day before Governor Cuomo released his executive budget and delivered his State of the State address, Assembly Education Committee Chair Cathy Nolan and state Senator Kevin Parker released a letter from 82 legislators, from both houses, calling on the governor to increase education funding by \$2.2 billion.

NYSUT Executive Vice President Andy Pallotta, coalition partners and numerous legislators flanked Nolan and Parker at Tuesday's announcement.

The letter and NYSUT press release can be found:

<http://www.nysut.org/news/2015/january/legislators-put-it-in-writing-fund-education-now>



Assembly Education Chair Cathy Nolan leads press conference with Executive V.P. Andy Pallotta and coalition partners

Women's Equality Act Update

One of the NYS Senate's first legislative acts was to, again, pass eight of the nine points of a women's rights package. The collective bundle of rights is known as the Women's Equality Agenda (WEA) and was originally composed of ten legislative points in 2013. One of the points that dealt with strengthening order-of-protection laws for domestic violence victims was chaptered into law (Chapter 480) bringing the full WEA to nine points.

While the NYS Assembly has passed the full WEA each year, the Senate saw fit to break the remaining points into nine separate individual bills. The reason for doing this is the controversy surrounding the Reproductive Health Act; a majority of Senate members do not want to pass a legislative package that includes the Act.

Based on its own adopted resolutions favoring support for advancing women's equality rights, NYSUT has been supportive of passing the full WEA.

Small Cities Lawsuit

On the same day the governor was delivering his offensive State of the State speech and presenting his billionaire-backed executive budget, the State Supreme Court in Albany began hearing arguments in the "Small Cities" (*Maisto v. New York*) case. Parent plaintiffs from the small city school districts of Jamestown, Kingston, Mount Vernon, Newburgh, Niagara Falls, Port Jervis, Poughkeepsie and Utica have fought for seven years to bring to trial the way New York state funds their public schools. They argued that the state has not

provided sufficient resources to ensure students receive a sound, basic education – a constitutionally guaranteed right.

This case is the first to address the issue of insufficient funding since the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) lawsuit was settled in 2006. The CFE case only addressed funding in New York City public schools

The state is currently arguing in court that providing additional resources in high-poverty, low-wealth areas will not make a difference in improving educational outcomes for these students.

The plaintiffs are being supported by school administrators, teachers and education experts. NYSUT has provided financial support for the case. NYSUT has also supplied counsel to the litigation team representing plaintiffs. That team also includes counsel from the Education Law Center and attorneys from two prominent litigation firms. The trial is expected to continue for several weeks.

The *Wall Street Journal* wrote about this case in "Small Cities Fight for More School Aid From New York State" which highlighted Utica in the story. They wrote, "Utica now serves children speaking 42 languages, including Nepali, Somali Bantu, Arabic and Bosnian. Teachers say they need smaller classes and more interpreters, social workers, guidance counselors and tutors to help students who lag behind, including American children from low-income families. Many of the city's children enter kindergarten with the skills of a 2-year-old and would benefit from more individual attention."

You can read the full article here:

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/small-cities-fight-for-more-school-aid-from-new-york-state-1421788972?autologin=y>

Federal Update

President Obama delivered his State of the Union speech to the nation. The president's speech focused on the economy, creating jobs and supporting families. With the exception of the president's plan to provide students with two years of community college at no cost, there were no new initiatives for education or health care announced.

You can watch the president's full speech at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sotu>

You can read AFT President Randi Weingarten's press release at:

<http://www.aft.org/press-release/aft-president-randi-weingarten-president-obamas-state-union-address-0>

You can read NEA President Lily Eskelsen García's press release at:

<http://educationvotes.nea.org/2015/01/21/president-obama-champions-families-education-workers/>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 2015

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| February 2 | NYSUT's Legislative Reception, Albany |
| February 12-13 | Emergency In-District Committee of 100 |
| February 13-15 | NYS Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislative Caucus, Albany |
| February 25 | BOCES Lobby Day, Albany |
| February 25-26 | Higher Ed Lobby Day, Albany |
| SAVE THE DATE – May 12 – Health Care Lobby Day, Albany | |