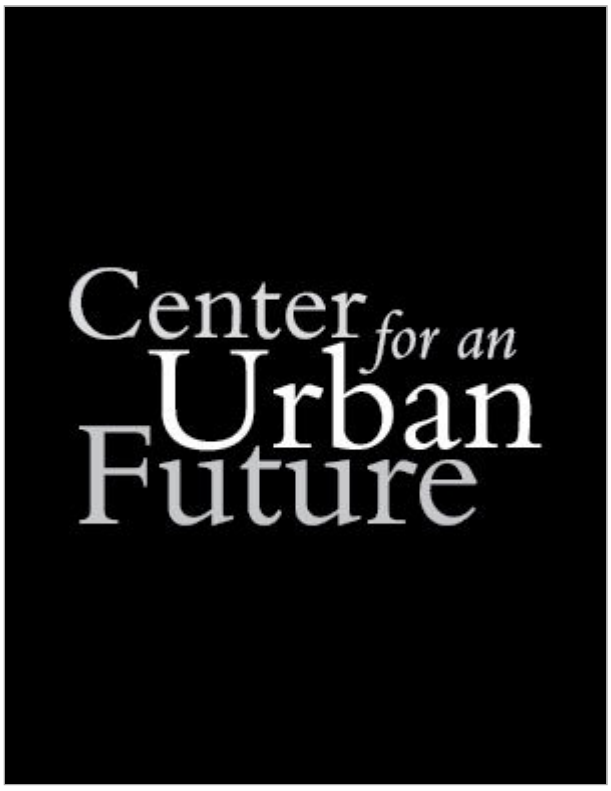


Commentary/Op-Ed - October 2002

Center Criticizes Governor for Ruling Out East River Tolls and Reinstatement of Commuter Tax

In response to Governor Pataki's announcement that he won't impose tolls on East River crossings or reinstate the Commuter Tax, the Center for an Urban Future urges all gubernatorial candidates to keep an open mind about new revenue-raising mechanisms that would allow the city to help itself.

by Jonathan Bowles

The Center for an Urban Future, a non-partisan Manhattan-based think tank, today criticized Governor Pataki for flatly ruling out two of the most sensible options for New York City to close its nearly unprecedented budget gap: the reinstatement of the city's commuter tax and placing tolls on East River bridges.

The Center urged Pataki and the other gubernatorial candidates to stop pandering to suburban voters and keep an open mind about a variety of revenue-raising measures that could allow the city to help itself.

"After what it's been through, New York City deserves far more from Governor Pataki and the state of New York than it's received," says Jonathan Bowles, research director of the Center for an Urban Future. "The city faces a $5 billion budget deficit and may be in store for a long-term structural deficit due to the relocation of several large corporations. Everyone knows about these problems, but where is the state of New York?"

"Governor Pataki and the other gubernatorial candidates need to show an willingness to help New York City out of its fiscal crisis, or at least let the city help itself. So far, however, they appear to be more interested in scoring political points in the suburbs than helping New York City through this crisis."

According to the Center, no single decision coming out of Albany in recent years has been as unfair and as discriminatory towards the city as the repeal of the commuter tax on suburban residents who work in the city. The tax, which imposed a rate of just 0.45 percent, provided the city with a steady stream of revenue since it was first imposed in the mid-1960s.

Earlier this year, the Center issued a report documenting that a series of actions undertaken by Governor Pataki and the Legislature over the past 5 to 10 years deprived New York City of nearly $2 billion in revenue and made it extremely difficult

for the city to help itself through this economic crisis. That report, titled “Sympathy But No Support,” is available on the Center’s website.



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