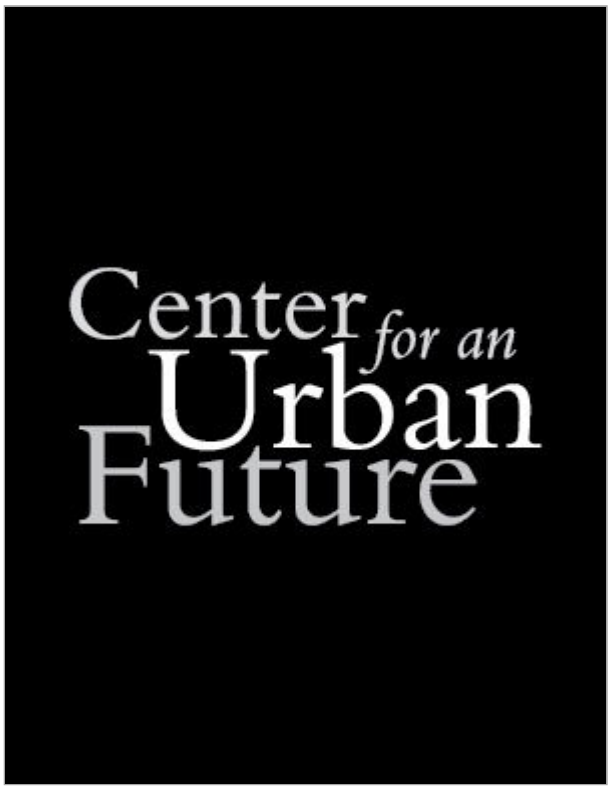


Commentary/Op-Ed - January 2003

Do Something For New York City, George!

In this press release on the eve of the governor's budget proposal, the Center offers new data to support reinstating the commuter tax--a move Governor Pataki has yet to endorse.

by Jonathan Bowles

The Center for an Urban Future, a non-partisan Manhattan-based policy research institute, today urged Governor Pataki to propose permanent revenue-raising solutions for ailing New York City when he unveils his executive budget on Wednesday—-not just one-shot band-aids of the type he has signaled support for thus far. Anything less, according to the Center, would be a kick in the pants to New York City and yet another case of the governor failing to provide meaningful fiscal relief to a city that was rocked by a terrorist attack, lost nearly 100,000 jobs and had to deal with the relocation of thousands of corporate jobs to the suburbs.

“New York City needs, and deserves, more from the state than one-shot fiscal solutions,” said Jonathan Bowles, research director of the Center for an Urban Future. “So far, the governor has done appallingly little to help the city get back on its feet. This is his opportunity to step to the plate and demonstrate real leadership.”

The Center argued that there were several things the governor could do that wouldn’t cost the state a dime, such as reinstating the commuter tax, allowing tolls on the East River bridges and implementing tort reform. While none of these things are easy politically, the Center stated that the Governor has a responsibility to put the city’s fiscal health over politics.

Making a case for reinstating the commuter tax, the Center released new figures showing how much worse off New YorkCity is compared to the six counties that surround the city to the north and the east:

- New York City lost 91,700 jobs in the year after 9/11, while the number of jobs in New York’s six surrounding counties actually went up or held steady. Westchester gained 700 jobs, Nassau and Suffolk had a combined gain of 600, Dutchess gained 200, Putnam’s employment was up by 100 and the number of jobs in Rockland remained unchanged.

- New York City's unemployment rate in November 2002 was 8.0 percent. It was even higher in the Bronx (10.2 percent) and Brooklyn (8.9). In the six counties surrounding the city to the north and the east, the unemployment rate was no higher than 4.1 percent--Westchester (3.7), Nassau (3.6), Suffolk (4.1), Rockland (3.5), Dutchess (3.7) and Putnam (3.0).

The Center has been a frequent critic of Governor Pataki and both houses of the Legislature for failing to provide meaningful fiscal relief to New York City in the year after September 11. Last year, the Center issued a report documenting that a series of actions undertaken by the governor and the legislature over the past decade 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.



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