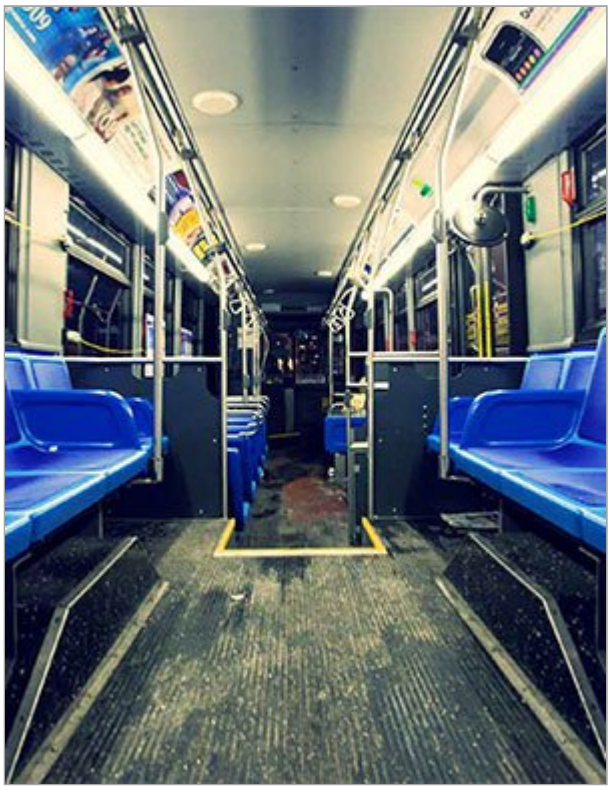
Center for an Urban Future
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Commentary/Op-Ed - April 2003

NYC’s Six Closest Suburbs Gained 39,000 Jobs Over the Past Year While the City Lost 58,000 Jobs

The Center for an Urban Future charges that Pataki and Bruno's opposition to commuter tax is pure politics and shows blatant disregard for NYC’s fiscal problems and post-9/11 needs.

by Jonathan Bowles

The Center for an Urban Future today revealed that New York City residents lost 57,700 jobs over the past 12 months, while residents of the six suburban counties closest to the city actually gained 38,800 jobs. The Center’s analysis, based on the latest jobs statistics from the New York State Department of Labor, also showed that the city’s unemployment rate went up from 7.8 percent to 9.2 percent over the past year while the unemployment rate in all six neighboring suburbs declined precipitously.

The Center’s study also showed that New York City has lost 110,200 jobs over the past two years, from February 2001 to February 2003, while the rest of the state had a net gain of 131,000 jobs during the same period.

The Center, a non-partisan think tank based in Manhattan, said that the new figures make a powerful case for reinstating the city’s commuter tax, and that continuing opposition to the commuter tax from Governor Pataki and Senate Majority Leader Bruno is based solely on politics and ignores overwhelming evidence that New York City is alone in the region in experiencing severe economic fallout from the September 11 terrorist attack.

“Pataki and Bruno have shown an astounding lack of interest in helping the city solve its severe economic and fiscal woes,” said Jonathan Bowles, research director of the Center for an Urban Future. “They expressed sympathy to the city and its residents after September 11, but they have shown no willingness to help the city deal with the economic crisis caused by the terrorist attack.”

“There’s no good reason to oppose reinstating the commuter tax,” added Bowles. “While the suburbs have some problems of their own, they are not facing any of the severe structural economic problems that the city is experiencing.”

Among the Center’s findings:

- The number of New York City residents with jobs declined by 57,700 between February 2002 and February 2003, a 1.7 percent drop.
- Over the same one-year period, employment was up in all six of the suburban counties closest to the city—showing a cumulative increase of 39,000 jobs. For instance:
- Suffolk gained 11,400 jobs;
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- Nassau gained 10,700 jobs;
- Westchester gained 8,800 jobs;
- Rockland gained 1,300 jobs;
- Dutchess gained 4,800 jobs;
- Putnam gained 1,800 jobs.
- Statewide, employment fell by just 48,000 jobs during the same one-year period, meaning that there was a net gain of 9,700 jobs in the 57 counties outside of the city.
- The Bronx has the highest unemployment rate (11.3 percent) of any county in the state. Brooklyn has the second highest unemployment rate (10.1 percent) among the state’s 62 counties.
- Overall, New York City’s unemployment rate is a staggering 9.2 percent. None of the six suburban counties closest to the city has an unemployment rate higher than 4.6 percent.
- The city’s unemployment rate increased dramatically over the past year, going from 7.8 percent in February 2002 to 9.2 percent in February 2003.
- During the same 12-month period, the unemployment rate has dropped in all six suburban counties:
- Westchester’s unemployment rate went from 4.6 percent to 4.0 percent;
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- In Nassau, the unemployment rate went from 4.4 percent to 3.8 percent;
- In Suffolk, it went from 4.8 percent to 4.6 percent;
- In Rockland, it dropped from 4.0 percent to 3.6 percent;
- In Putnam, it declined from 3.6 percent to 3.2 percent;
- In Dutchess, it went from 4.7 percent to 4.0 percent.
- New York City has lost 110,200 jobs over the past two years, from February 2001 to February 2003. During the same two-year period, the rest of the state had a net gain of 131,000 jobs.
- Five of the six suburban counties closest to the city experienced an increase in jobs during the two-year period between February 2001 and February 2003:
- Suffolk gained 18,800 jobs;
- Nassau gained 17,700 jobs;
- Rockland gained 4,900 jobs;

- Dutchess gained 6,300 jobs;
- Putnam gained 3,300 jobs;
- Westchester lost 4,000 jobs.

All figures used in the Center for an Urban Future's study are from the New York State Department of Labor's employment survey for February 2003, February 2002 and February 2001—using not seasonally adjusted figures based on place of residence.



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