

# Senator Pam Helming

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## **It's our job in Albany to support the job creators**

by Senator Pam Helming

The Siena College Research Institute recently released the results of its 17th Annual Upstate New York Business Leader Survey. Nearly 600 business leaders participated. Although I am disappointed with the results, I am not surprised. They are consistent with what I regularly hear from our local CEOs, Main Street business owners, and farmers.

The majority of respondents, 67%, say that business conditions in our state are getting worse. Twenty-nine percent feel they are staying the same, and only 4% believe conditions are getting better.

Business leaders in the Finger Lakes were just slightly more optimistic, with 56% saying conditions are getting worse, 38% staying the same, and 6% getting better.

From where I sit in the State Senate, this result was especially concerning, though again, not surprising: 76% of Finger Lakes business leaders say that the state government is a detriment to doing business in New York. Further, 62% of local leaders indicated that government regulation is the challenge they face that most concerns them.

Let's face it, it's not easy to do business in New York State. The overall tax burden is the highest in the nation. We're losing workers with a population decline that is worst in the nation. The state's ever-changing regulatory requirements make it difficult for businesses to operate efficiently and affordably, and for both existing and prospective companies to plan their future investments around. Futures that we want to ensure are built right here in our region.

Further, New York State's most aggressive in the nation, all-electric energy goals have many of the most environmentally-conscientious manufacturers concerned. Survey respondents said the state's climate mandates will have far more negative than positive impacts on their businesses. This means jobs are at risk. And when jobs are at risk, so is the health and stability of our communities.

I have proposed a number of solutions to support the success of our local businesses, including reducing taxes and onerous regulations, providing relief on unemployment insurance taxes, expanding workforce training tax credits, streamlining the permitting process, and investing in local infrastructure necessary for business attraction and growth.

Lessening the unnecessary burdens and excessive costs on businesses will have a positive ripple effect. It will encourage existing businesses to remain and grow here. New businesses will take a second look at locating in our area.

There is, of course, reason to be positive. Our region has a diverse economy. From advanced manufacturing to ag, food and beverage to optics and photonics, we are leading the nation in innovation. Just read the stories in this very paper about the companies and workforce driving growth and opportunity in our region.

The Legislature has the ability to course correct and support our business community. The time to do this is now, as we work on the final state budget and beyond that, consider legislation that will impact the future of business in New York. It's our job in Albany to support the job creators.

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