



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Senator Kennedy Praises State of the State Focus on Strengthening Workforce, Raising Minimum Wage, Growing Upstate Economy

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY January 9, 2013

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*Kennedy applauds Governor Cuomo's efforts to build comprehensive, progressive agenda for 2013 legislative session.*

*Governor's plans to strengthen the workforce reflect concepts Kennedy proposed in his **legislation to address the "skills gap" and create "Centers for Workforce Achievement" at community colleges across the state.***

*Kennedy organizing public **rally for Friday at 10 a.m. at the Gloria J. Parks Center** to urge Albany to **raise the minimum wage.***

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy, D-Buffalo, applauded the comprehensive plan that Governor Andrew Cuomo outlined in his 2013 State of the State address. Specifically, Kennedy highlighted proposals to address the “skills gap” and strengthen the state’s workforce, raise the minimum wage and grow the Upstate economy.

“Over the past two years, our state has started to move in the right direction. We’ve made progress, but there’s more work ahead,” Kennedy said. “I applaud Governor Cuomo for the efforts he’s already led and the plans he has laid out to grow our state’s economy.

“I’m thrilled to see the focus on bridging the skills gap and strengthening our workforce. Each month, it’s estimated at least 1000 local manufacturing jobs go unfilled, even though

many Western New Yorkers are out looking for jobs every day. Action is needed to bridge this gap. Over the summer, [I proposed a plan to establish Centers of Workforce Achievement](#) at community colleges across the state. The concepts I proposed in our initial plan are built into the program that Governor Cuomo outlined in his State of the State.

“It’s a model that will work: community colleges and local businesses will work in collaboration to develop a skilled workforce to match the needs of our regional economy. For example, ECC, Ford and others have identified an urgent need to prepare local workers for advanced manufacturing. Once we re-invent our community colleges and workforce development programs, we will ensure Western New Yorkers get the skills they need to secure good-paying jobs.”

Kennedy also reiterated his commitment to push for legislation to raise the minimum wage. The Senator is planning [a public rally urging action to “raise the people’s pay” Friday at 10 a.m. at the Gloria J. Parks Community Center in Buffalo.](#)

“The current minimum wage just doesn’t cut it for local families. At \$7.25 an hour, it’s just \$290 each week and barely \$15,000 a year for full-time work. That’s simply not enough to put food on the table and raise a family,” Kennedy said. “Raising the minimum wage will help lift families from poverty, and it will reduce the strain on safety-net programs caused by inadequate wages. An increase in the minimum wage will also act as an economic stimulus, since more families will have greater purchasing power, spending their higher wages at local small businesses,” Kennedy said.

“Now that the Governor has laid out his comprehensive plan to move the state forward in 2013, it’s time for us all to get work,” Kennedy added. “I look forward to working with the Governor and my legislative colleagues to deliver on the progressive agenda that New Yorkers are expecting. In addition to raising the minimum wage, strengthening our

workforce and growing our economy, we're committed to making our communities safer, improving our educational system, revamping gun laws, **reforming campaign finance laws**, achieving **fair and equitable pay for all** and fighting poverty and hunger across the state."

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*Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate's 63rd District, which is comprised of the town of Cheektowaga, the city of Lackawanna and most of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.*