



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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IDC unveils New York 2020 Agenda: A Blueprint for a Better New York

JEFFREY D. KLEIN January 7, 2016

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Robust policy package addresses education, housing, jobs and quality-of-life for all New Yorkers

Albany, NY — The **Independent Democratic Conference** released the *New York 2020 Agenda: A Blueprint for a Better New York* on Thursday, a comprehensive policy package focused on improving education, housing, employment and quality-of-life in every corner of New York State.

On a foundation of four pillars: *Educate New York 2020*; *House New York 2020*; *Work New York 2020*; and *Live New York 2020*, the visionary agenda builds upon the IDC's bold *Invest New York* and *Affordable New York* agendas to address the needs of working- and middle-class New Yorkers. The ambitious goals in each of the 2020 plans lay out a four-year path to lift up the state.

Chief among the IDC's proposals are:

- **A new, 12-week paid family leave proposal** that will ensure New York's workforce finally can afford to take needed time to welcome a child into the world or care for an ill-loved one. Under a new proposal, the IDC seeks to grant employees 12 weeks of paid family leave to care for a new child or sick loved one. This Family Care benefit would be separate from traditional disability insurance however would still operate

out of the Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) system, which grants 26-weeks off to injured and disabled workers. Temporary Disability Leave would continue to be funded through joint employee/employer contributions and disability benefits would significantly increase to match Family Care Leave benefits to \$700 a week compared to the current maximum benefit of \$170 a week.

- **The creation of the “50-hour learning week”** by investing \$550 million in afterschool programs, the support of existing Community Learning Schools and the development of 400 new Community Learning Schools, as well as a Kindergarten Fund financed by unclaimed lottery money.

- **The development of an innovative zero-interest college loan program** to keep college students out of the red. College graduates in New York State are strapped with an average \$26,000 debt. The IDC envisions the New York Achieve Loan Program, a zero-interest loan fund created with \$500 million of settlement monies, to keep college affordable and invest in the future of our state. Loans would be granted to first-time undergraduate students who finish in the top five of their high school class with a 3.5 GPA or higher or score a combined 1200 or more on the SAT or a composite score of 27 or higher on the ACT. Students could apply for the loans after accepting all federal, state and grant aid and could use up to \$6,500 a year on a private or public, four-year institution.

- **A continued commitment to the New York Public Housing Authority** will help cure the deplorable conditions faced by tenants. The IDC proposes the creation of the Public Housing Revitalization Fund to administer state grants for critical repairs in NYCHA developments. Building on last year’s \$100 million commitment from the state, the IDC calls for another \$100 million in state funding for NYCHA to be matched by New York City and a dedication of future excess Battery Park City Authority

surplus revenues, which would provide an additional \$400 million for repairs.

· **Raising the wage for caretakers to \$15 an hour** will ensure that we care for those who take care of our loved ones. While home health aides care for our most vulnerable citizens they earn a meager \$10.75 an hour and personal care aides make just a little more at \$11.73. Half of the human service workers, like social workers or child care workers, earn less than \$15 per hour, even though two thirds require college degrees to work. While New York State relies on these workers to deliver the critical services for our most vulnerable citizens, the state must do its part to raise its Medicaid reimbursement rates to service providers to ensure that these necessary wage increases do not lead to cuts in services. The IDC is advocating that these workers receive a \$15 wage in light of Governor Cuomo's announcement that state workers would receive a \$15 minimum wage.

"As legislators, we must be the architects of a great destiny for every citizen in the state of New York. The IDC's blueprints will build up this state over the next four years to enhance the lives of people in every corner of this state through paid family leave, enriching afterschool activities, zero-interest loans to leave our college students debt-free, middle-class affordable housing, NYCHA revitalization and protections for our seniors, to name a few. Together we can and will create a better New York," **said Independent Democratic Conference Leader Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester).**

"Upstate revitalization depends on new job creation and meeting the needs of industries facing demand for skilled employees. Manufacturers, especially, need more skilled workers than are currently available. The New York State Manufacturers Intermediary Apprenticeship Program (MIAP) will help companies create apprenticeship programs that simultaneously provide training and also put unemployed New Yorkers back to work," **said Independent Democratic Conference Deputy Leader David Valesky (D-Oneida).**

“Building the New York we need today means building for the New York we want tomorrow. With the IDC’s New York 2020 Agenda, the steps we take today will ensure that over the next four years we will improve the education, housing, work and overall lives of all New Yorkers. Our continued commitment to the New York Public Housing Authority will focus on addressing the deplorable conditions that tenants face, through the creation of the Public Housing Revitalization Fund, which will build on our previous work. With New York 2020, we will lay the foundation for the New York of tomorrow,” **said State Senator Diane Savino (D-SI/Brooklyn).**

“With the start of the new legislative session, we must enact common sense measures to strengthen New York's middle class and provide families across our state with the foundation for a brighter tomorrow. The IDC's New York 2020 Agenda lays out a comprehensive policy package that delivers real relief for all New Yorkers, by providing paid family leave, dependent care and commuter toll tax credits for middle class families, zero-interest loans and pre-paid college tuition for students, and ending the Gap Elimination once and for all. New Yorkers deserve the peace of mind that comes with a secure financial future, and through the IDC's 2020 agenda we will achieve that reality,” **said State Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland).**

“Our legislative priorities this upcoming session strike at the core of what will drive New York forward into the new year and beyond. From the moment a child enters a New York kindergarten up to the moment they’re no longer children at all and looking to finance their college tuition, the IDC’s proposals will lend a helping hand. Our infrastructure needs rebuilding and our unemployed are in need of a fair wage; The IDC will be the first in Albany pushing for the stone that gets two birds by creating jobs to repair our aging infrastructure. Over these next four years, we are redoubling our efforts and building a foundation on which middle class and working-class families thrive,” **said State Senator Tony Avella (D-Queens).**

Other signature issues include:

- **Passing Zombie Property Legislation** - Vacant and abandoned properties are a blight on our communities, causing devastating effects on the well-being of neighborhoods. The decaying houses can have a corrosive effect on localities, quickly turning into row upon row of boarded-up buildings that create hazardous areas and devalue homes. The IDC calls for a statewide registry of vacant and abandoned residential properties, while imposing a duty on mortgagees and loan servicing agents to take early action in protecting communities from crumbling homes.

- **Developing more affordable middle-income housing** - The IDC has sought to revive the spirit of Mitchell Lama by providing significant funding for middle-income housing for the first time in decades. Last year, the IDC successfully secured \$50 million: \$25 million to rehabilitate existing Mitchell Lama buildings and \$25 million for the Middle Income Housing Program, which serves families with incomes up to 130 percent of the AMI. Over the next four years, the IDC would like to see a \$700 million investment in the Middle Income Housing Program to construct new, affordable housing for working families. The IDC also proposes a Middle Income Housing Tax Credit, a 4 percent refundable tax credit, to spur the creation of units for families making up to 130 percent of the AMI.

- **Implementing ‘A New Deal for New York’** - New York State’s infrastructure needs an upgrade and New Yorkers need new and more jobs. The creation of the Empire Public Works Fund (EPW), the Community Jobs Program (CJP) and the New York State Manufacturers Intermediary Apprenticeship Program (MIAP) will help rebuild aging structures and put unemployed New Yorkers back to work. The EPW is a revolving loan fund for major infrastructure projects like bridges, tunnels, sewer

systems or toll roads that would provide loans to state entities for major projects. The CJP provides grants for smaller neighborhood level projects that revitalize communities, expand small business opportunities and put chronically unemployed people back to work. Preference would be given to projects with long-term employment offers and starting wages set at \$15 an hour. The MIAP program would be a public-private partnership between employers and New York State to give small and medium manufacturing firms in the state an opportunity to create registered apprenticeship programs without having to deal with many of the administrative burdens that make this an expensive and difficult task beyond the capabilities of many firms.

· **Increasing funding for quality child care and keeping day care centers safe** - Working families need affordable, quality childcare. The IDC wants increased funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, a child care tax credit and investment in the Quality Stars program. With a call for increased funding for child care, the IDC also recognizes the need for parents to be fully informed of the safety conditions within a day cares' walls. Alarming, the IDC discovered unsanitary and unsafe conditions in New York City day cares. Many providers were serial offenders — 88 operators were cited during every annual inspection and for the same infraction. Many failed their inspections 100 percent of the time. Parents have difficulties tracking down violation information and during an undercover investigation, operators were deceptive about their histories. A letter-grading system for day care centers will provide a clear way for parents and guardians to understand how a day care center performed on their annual inspection.

· **Protecting New Yorkers from high utility costs** - New Yorkers pay exorbitant utility rates, but have no say in the rate-setting process, unlike other states that have a

Utility Consumer Advocate. The IDC calls for the appointment of a Utility Consumer Advocate who would operate independently and provide a meaningful voice for consumers. In addition, to help low- and middle-class seniors the IDC proposes the Senior Heating Assistance Program (SHEAP), which would serve seniors with an annual income of less than \$75,000 for a family of two or \$55,000 for an individual, with a fixed benefit for heating costs.

Advocates and experts praised the pillars of IDC's *New York 2020: A Blueprint for a Better New York*.

"We applaud the Independent Democratic Conference's endorsement of a \$15 wage for homecare and other human service workers as well as the Conference's support for funding so that providers can pay the increased wages. We are gratified that the IDC recognizes the dedication of home care workers providing compassionate care for seniors and people with disabilities. Despite their vital work, many home care workers are forced to rely on food stamps and other public assistance to survive and care for their own children. Studies show that raising wages would not only lift workers out of poverty, but also reduce turnover and improve the quality of care for vulnerable clients. We look forward to working with the Conference on this and other proposals important to working New Yorkers," **said George Gresham, President of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East.**

"Sen. Klein and the IDC were early supporters of community schools. Thousands of New York City students are already benefitting from the work the IDC has done to make community schools a reality. By bolstering our current community schools and creating new ones, we will be able to help thousands more children," **said Michael Mulgrew, president of the United Federation of Teachers.**

"NYSUT appreciates the IDC's support for increased funding for community schools and expanded access to full-day kindergarten and after-school programs. These are programs

that truly help students,” **said NYSUT Executive Vice President Andrew Pallotta.**

“The RWDSU applauds the IDC in prioritizing issues which impact working people, such as paid family leave and access to child care programs like facilitated enrollment. Low wage workers, are struggling to survive in this state. New York families need the State Legislature to act immediately to implement these important policies,” **said Stuart Appelbaum, President of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union.**

“I applaud the efforts of the IDC to seek meaningful remedies to the economic challenges of working families. DC37 looks forward to working with the IDC this legislative session to advance several significant proposals, including paid family leave, zero interest college loans, a NYCHA Revitalization Fund and its child care initiative,” **said Henry Garrido, DC 37 Executive Director.**

“On behalf of the 200,000 members we represent, the NYS Building & Construction Trades Council applauds Senator Klein’s NY2020 Agenda, particularly “Work NY2020” which combines infrastructure investment with workforce development. The Building Trades has always been the backbone of New York’s middle class, and those hired through this program will join those ranks by learning skills that will provide them with a lifetime of opportunity. We look forward to working with the legislature to ensure that these funds, and all public funds, are disbursed through bidding procedures that include robust worker protections, and that Project Labor Agreements are utilized, where appropriate, so that local workers are afforded the best opportunities,” **said James Cahill, President of the NYS Building & Construction Trades Council.**

“The IDC has once again delivered a forward-thinking policy agenda that will impact working families across the state. The proposed NYCHA revitalization fund will bring critical resources to rapidly deteriorating developments that house hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. A meaningful transformation of public housing requires collaboration at all levels of

government and I commend the IDC for prioritizing State investment in NYCHA,” **said New York City Councilmember Ritchie Torres, Chair of the Committee on Public Housing.**

“AARP applauds the leadership of Senator Klein and the IDC for recognizing the struggles older middle-class New Yorkers face in their working lives and beyond, and for proposing sensible solutions. These include helping the increasing numbers of working New Yorkers who lack access to workplace retirement saving options, an independent advocate to fight for New York’s overburdened utility consumers, protecting the elderly from financial exploitation and New York City seniors from unaffordable rents through updates to the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program, and support for family caregivers with paid family leave. These proposals would undoubtedly help millions of New Yorkers age with independence and dignity,” **said Beth Finkel, State Director of AARP for New York State.**

“We applaud the IDC for continuing to prioritize paid family leave, a critical issue for New York's families. We look forward to working with the Senate, Assembly and Governor to finally enact a paid family leave program that will make it possible for New York's workers to care for their families without sacrificing their economic security,” **said Donna Dolan, Executive Director of the New York Paid Leave Coalition and a steering committee member of the Family Leave Insurance Campaign.**

Educate New York 2020:

“The City University of New York serves predominantly low and middle-income New Yorkers who provide our State with an educated workforce as well as a stable tax base. Investing in their future yields high dividends for the entire State. We look forward to continuing to work with Senator Klein and colleagues to assure that college affordability plans benefit hard-working CUNY students and their families,” **said Frank Sanchez, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, City University of New York.** “AfterSchool Works! NY: the New York State

Afterschool Network (ASW:NYSAN) is committed to providing access to high-quality expanded learning opportunities for all of New York State's youth to support their success in school, college, work, and life. The IDC's budget proposal for increased funding for afterschool and community schools will significantly expand access to these needed programs for youth. ASW:NYSAN supports the requested increases for afterschool and community schools funding,” **said Alli Lidie, Deputy Director of Afterschool Works! NY: the New York State Afterschool Network.**

“Senator Klein’s proposals are impressive and wide ranging. Zero-interest loans would be a significant help to students and families. The proposal is also important as a matter of justice. How does this nation justify charging banks the federal funds rate of one half of one percent and yet the best priced ‘subsidized student loans’ have a rate of 4.29 percent or higher. Additionally, the Senator's proposal to expand the tuition tax credit, which works hand in hand with TAP, would help middle and low income families enormously,” **said Charles L. Flynn, Jr., President of the College of Mount Saint Vincent.**

“Syracuse University is committed to working to ensure that higher education remain affordable, and we commend efforts to make college more accessible and keep our graduates here in New York State. We look forward to working with the Independent Democratic Conference to improve opportunity for all college students,” **said Eric D. Persons, Associate Vice President of Syracuse University.**

“Bronx Community College is supportive of efforts to increase college affordability for CUNY students. I support the investment of making a CUNY education more accessible to all New Yorkers. I look forward to working with Senator Klein and the IDC to support the successful higher education aspirations of all students,” **said Dr. Thomas A. Isekenegbe, President of Bronx Community College.**

“The Lower Hudson Education Coalition, representing the 77 public school superintendents and school board members in Dutchess, Putnam, Rockland and Westchester Counties, has as its top legislative priority the restoration of adequate and appropriate funding for the public schools of New York State. Given the severe limitations of the tax levy cap this year, providing a projected 0 percent increase, districts can expect virtually no increase in school tax revenues for the 2016-17 school year and will be completely dependent on state aid to help them maintain programs and staff. Therefore, the Lower Hudson Education Coalition calls upon the legislature and the Governor to eliminate the Gap Elimination Adjustment completely and to provide a significant increase in funding for Foundation Aid in the 2016-17 state budget,” **said Judy Wiener, Legislative Director of the Lower Hudson Education Coalition**

“We believe that much can, and should, be done to increase diversity in New York City's specialized high schools and that the best way to achieve this important goal is through increased outreach to underrepresented communities, accessible and free test preparation for all and a long-term commitment to improving early education opportunities for all students. The Brooklyn Tech Alumni Foundation and the Stuyvesant High School Alumni Association are encouraged that the Independent Democratic Conference has embraced such a multi-faceted approach in their 2016 state budget plan and we look forward to working with the IDC, the Assembly, the Senate and the Cuomo Administration to address diversity in the thoughtful, long-term manner that our City's families deserve,” **said Larry Cary, the President of the Brooklyn Technical High School Alumni Foundation.**

“The youth development focus of the Independent Democratic Conference is right on target. We applaud the proposed investment into all youth via the youth development program, a funding stream that is fairly distributed statewide based on the number of youth under age 21 in each county,” **said Frank Williams Jr., Board Member of the NYS Youth Bureaus.**

“The IDC recognizes higher education as a worthwhile investment and CICU wholly supports programs and proposals which create opportunities for students to pursue their college aspirations. The next generation of leaders are in high school classrooms across the state and we applaud any effort that helps them find their way to a college campus that best fits their academic potential,” **said Laura L. Anglin, President of the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (CICU).**

House New York 2020:

“United Neighborhood Houses, New York City’s federation of settlement houses and community centers, applauds the proposals for key investments in early childhood education, after-school, public housing and older adults in the IDC’s 2020 agenda. For New York State to succeed both now and in the next decade New York’s communities need to have stable and robust funding for the core services that keep communities strong. UNH and its member agencies look forward to working with Senator Klein to ensure a state budget this year and in the future that provides for New York’s communities,” **said Susan Stamler, Executive Director, United Neighborhood Houses.**

“New York is still reeling from the foreclosure crisis and affordable homeownership is under threat, making the opportunity to own a home out of reach for many middle- and working-class New Yorkers. The Community Reinvestment Program will help families keep their homes and promote and protect affordable homeownership, helping to build strong, thriving communities throughout New York State,” **said Christie Peale, Executive Director of the Center for NYC Neighborhoods.**

“New York would greatly benefit from the proposals for “Helping Homeowners in New York State” outlined in the IDC’s 2020 Agenda. The foreclosure crisis is still far from over in New York and our municipalities are increasingly feeling the strain of resulting vacant and

abandoned properties. The proposals include continued funding for the statewide Mortgage Assistance Program (MAP) that has a proven track record for keeping families in their homes, funding for a Community Restoration Fund that would keep foreclosed properties out of the hands of Wall Street investors and under local control, and creation of a statewide registry for vacant buildings with requirements that banks maintain them. This is a sound, multi-pronged proposal that would cost the state far less in prevention than what it will cost in community rehabilitation,” **said Kirsten Keefe, a Senior Attorney with Empire Justice Center and Director of its OAG Homeowner Protection Program (HOPP) Anchor Partner Program.**

“At a time of unprecedented homelessness, rising rents and skyrocketing land costs in many parts of the State, the New York Housing Conference applauds the Independent Democratic Conference (IDC) for recognizing the essential role of public housing and the importance of funding affordable housing programs in the State budget. We look forward to working with lawmakers to ensure affordable housing is a priority in this year's budget,” **said Rachel Fee, the Executive Director of the New York Housing Conference.**

“We applaud the IDC for its commitment to affordable housing and their continued recognition that clean, safe housing is critical for New York's families to grow and prosper. We are especially appreciative of the IDC's support for the new middle income housing program, which helps build sustainable communities that reflect our State's tremendous diversity, and we look forward to what we believe will be a historic year for affordable, supportive and senior housing in New York State,” **said Jolie Milstein, President and CEO of the New York State Association For Affordable Housing.**

“The Community Reinvestment Program provides a comprehensive road map for how New York can work to reverse the devastating rate of foreclosures we continue to face and help families at long last recover from the economic downturn of 2008. We thank Senator Klein for the leadership role he has played in developing a concrete, sensible plan for how we can reduce neighborhood blight, strengthen the economic and social vitality of at-risk

communities, and keep families together and in their homes,” **said Beth Goldman, President and Attorney-in-Charge of the New York Legal Assistance Group.**

“The NYCHA 2020 Plan lays out a sustained State-City effort to address the inadequate federal capital funds available to preserve NYCHA’s aging buildings. Past State and City disinvestment from the public housing they financed contributed to the current crisis. This is a critical time to reinvest in NYCHA and its residents,” **said Victor Bach, Senior Housing Policy Analyst, Community Service Society.**

Work New York 2020:

“It is no secret that New York’s advanced manufacturing industries face a growing demand for skilled workers, and in industries where we are seeing significant growth in our State especially among small and medium sized manufacturers who will benefit most from this program . In order to foster continued growth in these critical industries, we need to accommodate the growing need for skilled workers through an organized and formal apprenticeship program, as supported by the IDC. This support of our State apprenticeship needs shows just how much the IDC conference understands not only the growing needs of our manufacturing workforce, but also just how critical a growing and thriving manufacturing sector is to our State’s economy. On behalf of the Statewide manufacturing community, I thank Senator Valesky and his colleagues for their support of this much needed program, and look forward to working with them and seeing it through to fruition,” **said Manufacturers Alliance of New York State President & CEO Randy Wolken.**

“The IDC's priorities to grow New York's family farms and encourage more beginning farmers to get involved in agriculture are much appreciated by New York Farm Bureau. Business friendly approaches that incentivize growth are an important part of improving the rural economy upstate and on Long Island,” **said Dean Norton, President of the New York Farm Bureau.**

"FPWA applauds the IDC for seeking to address the needs of essential human services workers. New York is making meaningful progress towards changing the lives of working people and a first step is raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, and ensuring this increase is funded so that human services workers are included," **said Jennifer Jones Austin, CEO and Executive Director at the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies.**

"We are grateful for the IDC's support of raising wages for Direct Support Professionals and other low wage workers who provide life preserving services to adults and children with developmental disabilities and their families. Senator Carlucci has been a long standing champion of our field and we applaud his and the IDC's recognition that providers who employ these workers rely 100 percent on State and federal funding (and more than 95 percent on Medicaid) and that the State must increase funding to enable these workers to be paid a living wage. In addition, those who are making slightly more than the current minimum wage should also be given commensurate increases so that they maintain their current status. We thank the IDC for standing behind our workers and the people they support!" **said Winifred Schiff, Associate Executive Director for Legislative Affairs, InterAgency Council of Developmental Disabilities Agencies.**

"We thank the Independent Democratic Conference for their leadership in addressing income inequality in New York," said Allison Sesso, Executive Director of the Human Services Council. "By funding a \$15 minimum wage for health care workers, the State will improve the recruitment and retention of our workforce and increase stability of our sector. We look forward to working with the IDC and the State in policies that will invest in the human services sector to better serve communities across our state," **said Allison Sesso, Executive Director of the Human Services Council**

"We support Governor Cuomo's efforts to raise the minimum wage for all New Yorkers so that everyone who works a full-time job can earn enough to provide for themselves and their families," said Susan Constantino, President & CEO of Cerebral Palsy Associations of New

York State (CP of NYS). "Non-profit providers of supports and services for people with disabilities and their families, such as CP of NYS and our 24 Affiliates, receive the vast majority of our funds from government sources such as Medicaid. We applaud the IDC for recognizing that the Governor and the State Legislature must raise the rates paid for the services we provide in order for our organizations to be able to pay direct support professionals and other critical staff the wage increases that are being recommended," **said Susan Constantino, President & CEO of Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State (CP of NYS).**

Live New York 2020:

"We look forward to working with the IDC, the Governor and the rest of the legislature to adopt these proposals, which will make childcare more affordable, safer and more accessible to New Yorkers. Plans to increase the availability of subsidies and tax credits for families, while helping programs provide high quality care are win-wins for children, families, child care providers and our economy," **said Stephanie Gendell, Associate Executive Director for Policy and Government Relations, Citizens' Committee for Children.**

"Empire Justice Center thanks the IDC for their continued efforts to expand access to child care subsidies for low income working parents through an increased investment of over \$200 million. It is absolutely critical that the cost of complying with new federal health and safety requirements does not interfere with the availability of essential child care subsidies that make it possible for New York's low income families to go to work knowing their children are in safe, high quality care. At the same time, New York must also continue to expand the availability of subsidies to support low wage workers. The proposed investment will achieve this," **said Susan Antos, Senior Attorney, Empire Justice Center.**

"NY StateWide Senior Action Council is so pleased that the IDC has listened to the concerns of their constituency and continues the important work to reduce the financial burden older

New Yorkers face. StateWide is particularly happy to see the IDC leading on a new policy platform to provide recruitment and retention incentives for home care workers. We have found significant gaps in services based on a shortage of needed home care workers that allow a senior in need of assistance to remain in their own homes. The IDC focus on maintaining affordability of housing costs through income updates to SCRIE/DRIE and SCHE/DHE and assistance with the cost of home heating will provide much needed help to older New Yorkers, too many of whom are living on the edge of poverty. We applaud the effort to protect vulnerable NYers from scams by enabling coordination between financial institutions and law enforcement/adult protection services. The proposed paid family and medical leave will provide much needed relief to family caregivers while the increase in the Temporary Disability Insurance Program will allow those facing hardship to have a livable allowance. In its entirety, the IDC Senior Issues Policy Agenda will allow seniors to continue to live and contribute to the fabric of their communities, something that is good for all of us," **said Maria Alvarez, Executive Director, NY StateWide Senior Action Council.**

"I want to thank Senator Jeff Klein and all the members of the IDC for their continued leadership in advocating for issues impacting the everyday lives of older New Yorkers... From tax exemptions so older adults can stay in their homes to new retirement savings options, this plan represents an effort to assist the New Yorkers who spent years of their lives making our communities a better place to live. I hope this plan receives serious consideration," **said Ann Marie Cook, President & CEO of Lifespan.**

"On behalf of thousands of older New Yorkers struggling to afford their apartments, LiveOn NY believes the \$50,000 income level for SCRIE and DRIE must be made permanent. Almost 100,000 older adults in NYC pay more than 50 percent of their income in rent. SCRIE allows older adults to be able to afford to remain in their homes and prevents eviction. With an astounding 260,000 older New Yorkers experiencing elder abuse that goes unreported, LiveOn NY strongly supports enacting legislation that establishes a protocol for banks to

disclose information on suspicious transactions to adult protective services and District Attorney offices in a timely manner, to stop the bleeding of a senior's finances," **said Bobbie Sackman, Director of Public Policy, LiveOn NY.**