



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George M. Borrello

Statement by Senator George Borrello on Governor Cuomo's State of the State Address

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“New York State has greeted 2021 with an imperative: to rebuild and reset our state in the wake of the devastation caused by the coronavirus pandemic. To that end, there were areas of the Governor’s address that suggest common ground with several of the priorities advanced in the ‘Reset New York’ agenda unveiled last week by myself and my Senate Republican colleagues, which is encouraging.

“Yet, also notable was the outsize emphasis the Governor placed on the federal government and its responsibility to provide financial aid to help close our state’s \$15 billion deficit. While the federal government does have a role to play in our recovery, more focus belongs on the state’s culture of overspending and its burdensome tax and regulatory environment, which are persistent obstacles to our economic strength. Before COVID descended on our state in 2020, we were facing a \$6 billion budget deficit. Now is the time to revisit and reform our spending.

“I was glad to hear him say that New York cannot afford another statewide shutdown while we wait for full distribution of the COVID vaccine. The economic damage, job losses and educational harm to our children that resulted from our spring shutdown were catastrophic and will take years to recover from. Another wide-scale shutdown at this point could set us behind for a generation.

“It was a positive to hear him highlight the critical importance of accessible, affordable broadband service for New Yorkers. While I agree with his position that broadband needs to be more affordable, the best way to achieve that goal is to

reduce the ever-increasing taxes, fees and regulations that he keeps piling on providers. Those burdens are harming the goal of broadening access to still unserved, rural areas of the state as well as the goal of making internet service more affordable. It was disappointing to hear him still insist that broadband coverage in the state is at 98 percent, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

“I was glad to hear him acknowledge that the spiking crime rate in our cities is unacceptable and must be addressed. From day one, my colleagues and I predicted that the disastrous criminal justice reforms passed in 2019 would set public safety back decades and result in the rising victimization of innocent individuals. The Governor acknowledged this horrific problem as well as the reality that 94 percent of shooting victims have been from minority communities – the same communities who have been hit the hardest by this pandemic. However, there were no specific proposals mentioned, so we will have to reserve judgement on his solutions until we know more details.

“While today’s address was short on details, we will be learning more in the days ahead on the Governor’s plans on these and a range of issues. At this critical time for our state, I will be scrutinizing each one for its potential to rebuild our economy, create jobs, improve our weakened public safety efforts and close the dangerous educational gap that has resulted from the loss of in-school learning. Our ability to successfully address these problems will determine our future.”