



Independent Democratic Conference

2012 Legislative Agenda

Cutting Red Tape, Allowing Small Business to Thrive & Helping our Economy Grow: The IDC believes that government plays a critically important role in improving the lives of its citizens. However, it is clear that New York has lagged behind other states in job creation and small business growth. Through the ThoughtRaiser Initiative, the IDC has met with many employers who shared their experiences with doing business in New York, and gave their insights on where government has been helpful and where bureaucracy and red tape have hurt their ability to succeed and expand. These insights will be the basis of a regulatory reform package that the IDC will unveil very soon.

Improving Upon the Toughest Anti-Foreclosure Laws in the Country: Members of the Independent Democratic Conference spearheaded the implementation of the toughest foreclosure prevention and protection laws in the country. However, much work remains to ensure that the American Dream remains alive and well in New York. The IDC is committed to ensuring that anti-foreclosure programs that have helped thousands of New Yorkers stay in their homes remain up and running. Additionally, the IDC will be seeking the passage of priority legislation, (S.697A) that will protect the rights of homeowners and make banks seeking to foreclose on a home to show proof that they own the property.

Identifying Government Waste and Creating Government Efficiency: The IDC last year identified more than \$1 billion in potential savings through increased government efficiencies, cracking down on wasteful spending and streamlining bureaucracy. As a conference, and as members of the New York State Senate Task Force on Government Efficiency, the IDC will continue this work and help bring New York State Government into the 21st Century.

Standing Up for Our Most Vulnerable Populations: The IDC is committed to making sure those who are often the most vulnerable or most susceptible to harm, be educated, protected and given a voice in New York State. Whether it is our elderly population suffering financial, or physical abuse, our school age children facing 21st century bullying, or our youth facing the horrific trauma of child abuse, the IDC is committed to passing meaningful legislation to protect all.

Delivering Mandate Relief for Local School Districts and Municipalities: State government must also do all that it can to help school districts and local governments control their costs by eliminating non-essential state mandates and encouraging a more streamlined government through regionalization, shared services and functional consolidations. The IDC, building on mandate relief proposals they

introduced last year, will continue to advance ways to reduce burdens on local governments and schools.

Protecting Reproductive Rights in New York: New York's reproductive health laws are outdated and inadequate. The Woman's Reproductive Health Act of 2012 is needed to ensure that New York gives women an affirmative right to their reproductive health and would enact the critically important reforms in New York's laws governing women's reproductive health such as protecting the right to privacy in reproductive decision-making, safeguarding not only the right to end a pregnancy, but also the right to bear a child and the right to use, or refuse birth control.

Strengthening New York's Agricultural Economy: New York has a rich agricultural heritage and farming remains an important part of this state's economy. The IDC will continue its efforts to strengthen distribution networks and promote the sale of more Upstate farm products in downstate markets. Additionally, the IDC is pushing priority legislation (S.5078) to help New York's revitalized hops growing industry, by allowing the creation of a farm brewery license. Modeled on New York's wine industry, this license would strengthen agricultural tourism in New York by allowing Empire State hops growers to brew their own beer and sell it on-site.

Combating the Rise of Prescription Drug Abuse: From Staten Island, to Long Island, to the Thousand Islands, New York has seen a steady rise in prescription drug abuse. With this epidemic comes a rise in crime, and a rise in violence. The IDC is committed to working with law enforcement and addiction recovery experts to develop a comprehensive strategy to fight prescription drug abuse, get treatment for those who are addicted, and punish those who seek to profit off their misery.