

November 17, 2019

Dear Assemblyman Richard N. Gottfried and Senator Gustavo Rivera, Chairs  
New York State Committees on Health,

A quick look at the NY State FY 2018 budget highlights shows \$148 billion for Department of Health;

\$137 billion for Medicaid (represents two year appropriation authority), and

\$6.8 billion for remaining health program spending.

There are multiple other health care categories, but just adding these three together shows that New Yorkers paid nearly \$300 billion to provide health care benefits for elected municipal officials and state employees - benefits "regular" tax-paying residents like me do not receive.

Former Ulster County Executive Mike Hein introduced last year's budget this way: "Each year, governments typically see huge increases in health insurance premiums which leads to budgetary challenges."

Locally, between the New Paltz School District and New Paltz Town taxes, I estimate that New Paltz taxpayers pay another \$20 million in health care benefits.

Those of us who worked for non-profits, small businesses or were self-employed paid for all this public health care - **while also paying for our own plans**. Monthly premiums, in my case at least, were so expensive that vision and dental policies were out of reach.

Clearly, this is unfair. I have contributed all my working life to paying for health care for a privileged class of New Yorkers. Now it's time to extend these benefits to the people who pay for them.

Removing private insurers from the system will literally free up billions of dollars that can go toward providing health care for all New Yorkers.

Like education, health care is a fundamental public service that should be granted to each of us. Please pass the New York Health Act.

Sincerely,

**Kristin Brown**

Kristin Brown, New Paltz, NY 12561