

TAXATION & FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

- POLICY STATEMENT -

To achieve a balanced budget, either government spending must be reduced or more tax dollars must be raised. Economic growth can be encouraged by wise government spending; however, the Grange supports a prudent fiscal policy by curtailing expenditures in several areas. We recommend action be taken to move toward balanced general fund budgets and reduction of fraud at all levels of government. Future generations should not be burdened with the expenditures of today. The growth of government debt must be stopped. Authorities should vigorously prosecute those who commit fraud at all levels of Government.

Local governments are burdened by the weight of mandates. These mandates must be fully funded by the government of origin. We call upon the Governor and State Legislature to repeal costly unfunded mandates. We favor legislation to bar the state and federal governments from imposing any new mandated services on local governments unless they fully fund these mandates.

Alternative tax sources should be explored that are fairer and more equitable than our current tax policies. Dedicated funds must be used solely for the purpose for which they were intended.

Timely passage of the New York State Budget is a necessity, along with eliminating the 3-person control (Governor, Senate Majority Leader and the Assembly Speaker) of budget development and timing. The New York State Grange strongly supports reform efforts to correct this situation.

In order to maintain fiscal responsibility, it is imperative that individuals, businesses and companies carry adequate liability insurance.

October 2018

BANKS AND SAVINGS/LOAN ASSOCIATIONS

DORMANT BANK ACCOUNTS

We support legislation requiring financial institutions to notify account holders that their accounts are inactive. (2016)

MUNICIPAL DEPOSITS IN CREDIT UNIONS AND THRIFT INSTITUTIONS

We request the State Legislature to enact legislation that amends all applicable state laws to allow local governments to deposit public funds in credit unions, savings banks and savings and loan associations. (2016)

BOTTLE DEPOSITS

DRINK CONTAINER LABELS

We support legislation or regulation that requires all drink containers requiring a deposit have labels that are not easily removed. (2017)

EXPANDED BOTTLE BILL

We support a legislative change that would approve a five-cent deposit on all beverage bottles and cans including wine, liquor, sports drinks, and juice to further help keep our highways and roadsides clean. (2017)

UNCLAIMED BOTTLE DEPOSIT MONEY

We support legislative action to make sure that the unclaimed bottle deposit money (when available) is dedicated only to help fund environmental programs (cleanup, educational outreach programs and needed coordinators) all necessary to keep us in compliance with state mandates that each community must have an active solid waste and recycling program with a high percentage of resident participation. (2014)

BUSINESS/INDUSTRY

NEW YORK STATE POPULATION OUTFLOW

We urge our elected officials to take into consideration the need to lower the taxes in New York State that cause vibrant industries to leave the state for areas that present a better financial return because of lower taxing demands. (2015)

CREDIT CARDS

INTEREST RATES

We support legislation that would amend the Credit Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009 by setting a maximum interest rate for all credit cards and by fining those who issue credit cards and attempt to make up possible losses by imposing fees, higher interest rates or other charges on responsible card holders who pay their entire balance in full each month. (2014)

ELECTED OFFICIALS

DISTRICT ATTORNEY (DA) INCREASE IN PAY

We support legislation that would amend section 183a of judiciary law to require the state to reimburse the counties for the entire cost of any increase in the annual salary of the District Attorney due to an increase in the annual salary of a justice of the Supreme Court or county judge. (2016)

REIMBURSEMENT FOR STATE LAWMAKERS

We favor legislation that requires state lawmakers be reimbursed only the amount verified by submitted receipts, not to exceed federal guidelines, and that the State Comptroller post lawmakers' total monthly reimbursement on the OpenbookNY.com website where the office currently posts agency spending. (2015)

FUEL/GASOLINE

REDUCTION OF GASOLINE TAX

We urge the New York State Legislature to enact a law reducing the gasoline tax to lower the overall cost of a gallon of gasoline. (2015)

HEALTH CARE

TAXES ON HOSPITALS AND NURSING HOMES IN NEW YORK STATE

We oppose any new taxes on hospitals and nursing homes. (2014)

HIGHWAYS/INTERSTATES

FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION BILL

We support passage of the MAP-21 Reauthorization Act or similar legislation that increases the federal funding allocation to maintain and repair local bridges throughout the nation and that the legislation include obtaining at least \$121 million per year (this funding to be locked in until 2020) for maintaining and repairing local bridges in New York State. (2014)

IMPROVING LOCAL TOWN ROADS

We seek legislative action to increase highway funding to assist town governments in providing adequate rural roads. (2017)

MOTOR FUEL TAX

We recommend the passing of legislation that would establish a dedicated fund for Road Fuel Taxes, and that this dedicated fund would be used solely, as originally intended, for New York State bridge and road repairs. (2015)

LOCAL COURTS & GOVERNMENT/SCHOOL DISTRICTS

INCREASE IN JUSTICE COURT FUNDING

We seek legislation to revise General Municipal Law 99-1 that would increase reimbursement fees to Towns and Villages to assist local taxpayers in funding justice court operational expenses. (2017)

MANDATE RELIEF

We support the passage of a constitutional amendment to bar the state from imposing any new mandate services on local governments unless the state pays for the requirements. (2016)

We call upon the Governor and State Legislature to repeal costly unfunded mandates on local government, including: 1) raising the project cost thresholds before WICKS would be applicable; 2) reform prevailing wage; and 3) including the ability to pay, without raising taxes, as a priority consideration for binding arbitration panels. (2016)

REPEAL OF WICKS LAW FOR MUNICIPALITIES AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

We seek legislation to repeal the Wicks Law for all municipalities and school districts. (2017)

MILITARY

CUTS TO MILITARY PAY AND BENEFITS

We strongly oppose legislation that would cut the pay and benefits of our active duty and retired military service members. (2016)

MORTGAGES

GOOD NEIGHBOR BILL

We support the Good Neighbor Bill or similar legislation which would require a plaintiff in a mortgage foreclosure action to maintain the property in good faith and provide a contact person for the property. (2018)

MOTOR VEHICLES/INSURANCE

COLLISION/COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE COVERAGE

We support legislation that would amend New York State Insurance law to prohibit insurers providing collision or comprehensive coverage of motor vehicles from requiring repair shops to use specific vendors or processes for acquisition of vehicle repair parts and materials. (2018)

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR PROPERTY DAMAGE ON AUTO INSURANCE

We support legislation that would increase the minimum property damage from \$10,000 to \$25,000 on all New York State auto insurance policies. (2018)

TIGHTENING OF NO-FAULT INSURANCE REGULATIONS

We support passage of legislation that would address fraud and abuse in no-fault cases, eliminating loopholes that innovative criminal enterprises have used to exploit the system. (2016)

PENSION/RETIREMENT PLANS

NYS PENSION RETIREMENT AGE

We support leaving the retirement age at 55, for employees covered under the New York State Retirement System, having 10 years of service. (2014)

PENSIONS FOR CONVICTED PUBLIC OFFICIALS

We support legislation at all levels of government that would strip the publicly funded portion of retirement benefits and/or pension rights from any elected or appointed federal, state or local official convicted of a breach of public trust. (2014)

SOCIAL SECURITY INCREASE

We support legislation that would give an annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increase to Social Security recipients and further, that Social Security payments should increase by the amount of cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), plus cost of any increased Medicare premiums. (2016)

PERSONAL TAXES/INCOME

EXEMPTION CONSIDERATIONS FOR EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

We request the State Legislature to establish additional incentives for emergency service volunteers (firemen and rescue squads), such as greater levels of reduced property tax assessments. (2017)

We support legislation that would amend New York State Tax Law by establishing a graduated credit on New York State income tax for all active volunteer firefighters, volunteer ambulance workers and volunteer emergency medical personnel, beginning with \$200 for one year of qualifying service and increasing by \$100 increments, annually, to a maximum of \$1,100 for ten or more years of consecutive qualifying service. (2016)

REVERSE MORTGAGES

We request that the Legislative Committees with oversight of lending practices consider regulations that will protect seniors from the unscrupulous practices of some reverse mortgage lenders. (2017)

TAX CREDIT FOR SNOWMOBILE ACCESS ON LAND

We support legislation that would amend the New York State tax law in relation to providing a New York State Income tax credit to certain landowners who allow snowmobile access on such land. (2018)

PROPERTY TAXES

FUNDING DISTRIBUTIONS FROM THE STAR EXEMPTION PROGRAM

We support the examination of funding distribution to schools for the STAR Exemption Program so that equal distribution is given to upstate schools that are more susceptible to economic factors than are more affluent areas. (2015)

PRESERVATION OF LOCAL TAXATION ON CERTAIN LANDS OWNED BY NEW YORK STATE

We support the present authority for taxation of certain state lands and urge the State Legislature to develop a uniform policy for the taxation of certain state lands used for private use. (2018)

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

We oppose the passage of legislation for property tax reform that would take away property tax exemptions from non-profit organizations, such as religious orders and land trusts etc. unless they can prove that the property is used primarily as part of their core mission. (2018)

UNPAID BUILDING AND CODE VIOLATIONS AS DELINQUENT TAXES

We support legislation that would amend the New York State real property tax law to authorize municipalities to treat unpaid building code and fire code fines as delinquent taxes and impose tax liens upon the real property which is the subject of such fines. We oppose legislation that would exempt the property if it is the primary residence for one or more of the property owners. (2018)

SOCIAL SECURITY

FEDERAL SEQUESTER CUTS

We oppose any planned cuts to Social Security or Medicare benefits now or in the future to help reduce the Federal Budget. (2018)

PRIVATE SOCIAL SECURITY ACCOUNTS

We strongly oppose directing any monies from the Social Security System into private accounts or the stock market. (2017)

SOCIAL SECURITY LOCKBOX LAW

We support legislation that would fully protect and strengthen the Social Security Trust Fund. (2016)

STATE PARKS

CLOSING N.Y. STATE PARKS DUE TO BUDGETARY SHORTFALL

We oppose the closure of parks and historical sites as well as cuts in hours, days and/or season of operation, levels of access to public facilities and levels of service thereof as a method of closing budget gaps. (2015)

STAR REBATE PROGRAM

S OR C CORPORATIONS

We support the enactment of legislation which would extend the STAR Exemption to farms owned by S or C corporations or partnerships, provided that a shareholder or partner has his primary residence on the farm receiving the exemption. (2017)

SENIOR CITIZEN ENHANCED STAR EXEMPTION

We support legislation permitting a person eligible for the Enhanced STAR Program to substitute a more recent year's income for purposes of determining eligibility for the Enhanced STAR exemption for school tax relief. (2017)

STATE BUDGET/FUNDS

PENALTY FOR LATE NEW YORK STATE BUDGET

We favor that for every day without an adopted New York State Budget after the April 1st deadline, the New York State Legislators be fined two days' pay until the budget is adopted, the fines to be imposed by the Attorney General. (2015)

STATE BUDGET PASSAGE

We support a timely passage of the New York State budget, and reforms to eliminate the closed door, three-person control of budget development. (2015)

SWEEPING DEDICATED FUNDS

We strongly oppose the practice of sweeping dedicated funds for the purpose of balancing the State Budget, and that appropriate legislation is enacted to prevent this practice. (2018)

UNFUNDED MANDATES

We support legislation which would restrict the imposition of unfunded mandates on political subdivisions (local governments) of the state. (2018)

STATE OFFICES/PROGRAMS

LOTTERY MONEY FOR EDUCATION

We support the increase of money sent to schools above budgeted state funding and further that more assistance be given to New York students attending colleges in New York State and that the amount spent for lottery advertising be cut to help meet the above goals. (2014)

We support the prohibition of a resident's lottery winnings being used in any calculations to determine a school district's state aid. (2016)

TRANSPORTATION

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY TAX

We urge the New York State Legislature to repeal the Metropolitan Commuter Transportation Mobility Tax (MCTMT) for the counties of Rockland, Orange, Putnam and Dutchess. (2014)