



Free New York

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2026 STATE OF THE STATE RESPONSE HOCHUL'S "AFFORDABILITY" AGENDA: MORE TAXES, MORE CONTROL, LESS FREEDOM

by Libertarian Party of New York

Governor Kathy Hochul's 2026 State of the State address once again promises to make life "more affordable" through a massive wishlist of government programs, subsidies, and regulations, over 200 initiatives, including a push toward universal child care, more subway barriers and policing, crackdowns on 3D-printed firearms, online "protections" for kids, and various energy and housing reforms that involve even more state intervention.

I have one simple question for the

Governor: When has Albany ever made life truly more affordable by doing more instead of less?

New Yorkers are crushed under the highest taxes in the nation, sky-high energy bills, crushing housing costs driven by endless zoning red tape and mandates, and a regulatory state that strangles small businesses and drives families out. Yet the response from Albany is always the same: more spending, more programs, more bureaucrats, more strings attached.

The core belief of the Libertarian

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Party of New York is clear: Government should get out of the way.

End the endless cycle of taxation and spending. Slash income taxes, property taxes, and sales taxes across the board. Repeal suffocating regulations that drive up housing and business costs. Let consenting adults make their own choices in child care, energy, online life, and self-defense.

Governor Hochul talks about fighting for New York families. The real fight is against the bloated, intrusive state government she leads—one that takes our money, dictates our choices, and then promises to solve the problems it created.

New Yorkers deserve better: freedom, opportunity, and their own money back in their pockets.

THE CREEPING CONSOLIDATION: HOW NEW YORK'S EFFICIENCY DRIVES THREATEN RURAL LIBERTY

by Christopher Skelly
Communications Director

Across parts of upstate New York, local autonomy is facing a direct challenge. County Leaders, citing government efficiency, are beginning to push small towns and villages to consolidate services or dissolve entirely. Now, this may appear to be fiscally responsible; however, they're actually eroding local governance and undermining the autonomy that rural communities have the right to defend.

Chautauqua County, with a population of roughly 127,000, has expanded its Government Reduction Initiative. The 2026 budget reserves thousands of dollars for certain incentives and studies, while offering towns that agree to consolidate \$50K to \$100K per merger.

Defenders assert that this consolidation of services will address declining population and rising costs, and promise savings and lower property taxes. Now, sure, this sounds great! I mean, who wouldn't be in favor of lower property taxes? What's the issue? The issue is that these changes often depend on centralized mandates. The issue is that these programs operate under a coercive framework, funded by your dollars taken by force, essentially

funding your own disempowerment. Trading away local self-rule for the illusion of efficiency is a cost no free community should accept.

For small towns like Ripley, with a population of roughly 2,300, and Mina, with a population of roughly 1,000, these kinds of incentives exploit fiscal hardship. A shrinking tax base and strict state mandates mean that 'voluntary' consolidation is really not a choice. When counties control funding, and smaller towns struggle to survive, a permanent loss of self-rule is traded for what is often only short-term relief. While a more genuine form of cooperation between towns would honor local control, more county-driven consolidation centralizes power. Instead, these towns might come together to share the costs of equipment, reducing costs while preserving their local identities. Creating region-based committees to manage emergency services would also preserve autonomy, making certain that local needs remain a focus while sharing the cost. These solutions highlight how these towns can work together without sacrificing their independence.

Home rule is affirmed in Article IX of New York's Constitution. Coercing towns into these mergers will only centralize authority and si-

lence residents. Any policy, even those that tout the illusion of government efficiency, that diminishes local autonomy is an attack on liberty.

If you value localized liberty, it's time to act. Attend your local town board and county legislative meetings to defend self-rule and challenge the centralization of power. Demand open debate and transparency on any proposed plans. Support local organizations, including Libertarian Party of New York affiliates, that continue to stand against unfunded mandates and continue to uphold voluntary cooperation over the 'efficiency' of government restructuring. Write letters to local newspaper editors to share your views. Connect with your neighboring towns to build alliances for support. These kinds of actions will empower residents to preserve their local autonomy.

True efficiency does not require sacrificing your liberty. Strengthening communities to innovate, eliminating state mandates, and removing obstacles can reduce costs while still protecting local rule. Voluntary reform is the path to genuine self-government, not an enforced consolidation of services.

NEW YORK STATE'S DELEGATION TO 2026 LIBERTARIAN NATIONAL CONVENTION

New York has 33 Delegate spots. The Alternate Delegates will be voted on at the next meeting, once their eligibility is confirmed. If any Delegates withdraw, the Alternate Delegates will be promoted to Delegate.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Duane Whitmer | 13. Blay Tarnoff | 25. Larry Sharpe |
| 2. Andrew Kolstee | 14. Jonathan Gunther | 26. James Condon |
| 3. Chance Haywood (CR) | 15. Charles Dorgan | 27. Caryn Tarnoff |
| 4. Mark Axinn | 16. Susan Overeem-Cummings | 28. James Ostrowski |
| 5. Justin Carman | 17. Mark Braiman | 29. Randyn Tarnoff |
| 6. Pietro Geraci | 18. Vincent O'Neill | 30. James Fitch |
| 7. Paul Grindle | 19. Juan Ayala | 31. Gary Triestman |
| 8. Christopher Skelly | 20. Mark Weinblatt | 32. Daniel Donnelly |
| 9. Catrina Rocco | 21. Patrick Corrigan | 33. Thomas Quiter |
| 10. Rose Leatherman (PR) | 22. Theresa Corrigan | |
| 11. Christian Padgett (PAR) | 23. Nicole Hewson | |
| 12. Steven Becker (CAR) | 24. Jack Terran | |

CR = Credentials Representative CAR = Credentials Alternate Representative
PR = Platform Representaitve PAR = Platform Alternate Representative



LEARN MORE:

www.LarrySharpe.com

ICE, HYPOCRACY, AND THE FAILURE OF BOTH PARTIES

by **Pietro Geraci**
Outreach Director

Democrats are just as responsible for the tragedies in Minneapolis as Trump and his ICE goons. That sounds absurd until you realize, Dear Reader, that Democrats had an opportunity to abolish ICE during the Biden administration, but instead voted to continue funding the agency. They also had an opportunity to resolve the immigration crisis, disincentivizing illegal immigration by restoring the Ellis Island immigration policy - performing health and criminal checks on prospective immigrants and issuing green cards to those who pass - but instead stuck with the status quo, setting the stage for the current chaos.

Don't get me wrong, the blatant lying from Trump administration officials about the cold-blooded murders of Renée Good and Alex Pretti, the blind, unquestioning loyalty of Team MAGA to Trump no matter what travesties he unleashes, and the discarding of the First, Second and Fourth Amendments by the political Right are alarming, but Democratic politicians can miss me with their huffing and puffing.

The disturbing truth is that neither party wants to solve the immigration crisis, because both parties can use it for fundraising and campaigning. Just think of all the money Democratic Congressional candidates will raise on this issue, while Republicans will continue to clamor for more ICE activity and fundraise off fear to stop these Democratic candidates. After all, this country must be rid of dangerous law-breakers, like toddlers, Native Americans and college students.

Yes, I am aware that there are dangerous criminals among immigrants, but undocumented immigrants commit fewer crimes than those that came here legally and far fewer than native-born citizens. ICE is targeting hard-working parents and teenagers; there are even documented cases of U.S. citizens being wrongfully detained due to profiling. How is deporting people who have been here for years, working hard and paying taxes, making America safe or great?

Moreover, why should we continue to trust either party to solve our nation's most pressing issues? Both fail miserably: on inflation, housing

costs, healthcare, education, and foreign policy, we are told year after year to accept less, pay more, and lower our expectations. Why should we continue to trust two parties that repeatedly demonstrate their inability—or unwillingness—to solve the nation's most pressing problems?

It's time to cast aside both major parties and put your faith in the Libertarian Party, the only party which stands for all your rights all the time! The LP has a comprehensive plan to fix our immigration policies and is committed to abolishing ICE. The LP's commitment to free market and classical liberal policies would lead to improvements with the aforementioned issues as well, as demonstrated by Argentina's Libertarian President Javier Milei.

Stop depending on parties with no incentive to help you! Learn more about the Libertarian Party at lp.org and lpny.org and get involved today!

Don't see your county listed?

**We are looking for Libertarians
to organize new County Affiliates!**

Contact us for more details!

affiliates@lpny.org

COUNTY AFFILIATE NEWS

BRONX

CONTACT:
Kim Antonio,
Acting County Chair

CHAUTAUQUA

NEXT MEETING:
Tues., Feb. 10, 2026 @ 7:00 PM
on Zoom
(second Tuesdays)

CONTACT:
Andrew Kolstee, Chair
akolstee@lpny.org

LEARN MORE:
www.chautauquaLP.org
fb.com/chautauquaLP

CHEMUNG

CONTACT:
Nick Grasso, Chair
ngrasso89@yahoo.com

LEARN MORE:
lpchemung.org

COLUMBIA

NEXT MEETING:
Wed., Feb. 18, 2026 @ 7 PM
Google Meet
(third Wednesdays)

CONTACT:
Scott Hoskins, Chair
scottdhoskins@gmail.com

DUTCHESS

NEXT MEETING:
Sat., Feb. 21, 2026 @ 5 PM
Village Restaurant
& Pancake Factory
1540 Route 44, Pleasant Valley
(3rd Saturdays)

CONTACT:
Robert Cocomello, Chair
Catrina Rocco, Vice-Chair
info@dutchesscountylp.org

LEARN MORE:
dutchesscountylp.org

ERIE

CONTACT:
Duane Whitmer, Chair
chairman@eriecountylp.org

KINGS (BROOKLYN)

NEXT MEETING:
Tues., Feb. 17, 2026 at 3 PM
@ Fourth Avenue Pub
76 4th Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11217
(3rd Tuesdays)

CONTACT:
Christopher Skelly, Chair
cskelly@lpny.org

MADISON

CONTACT:
Mark Braiman, Chair
mbraiman@lpny.org

MONROE

NEXT MEETING:
Thurs., Feb. 5, 2026 @ 7 PM
(first Thursdays)
Contact us for the link.

CONTACT:
Steve Becker, Chair
drsbecker@aol.com

LEARN MORE:
monroecountylp.org
Ask about the Google Group
and social meetings

NASSAU

NEXT MEETING:
Thurs., Feb. 12, 2026 at 7 PM
@ Landmark Diner
(2nd Thursdays)

CONTACT:
Jon Gunther,
Executive Committee Chair
jonguntherlibertarian@gmail.com

Blay Tarnoff,
County Committee Chair
LPNY@eblay.com

NEW YORK (MANHATTAN)

CONTACT:
Chance Haywood, Chair
chaywood@lpny.org

ONEIDA

CONTACT:
Keith Redhead, Chair
kredhead@lpny.org

ONONDAGA

NEXT MEETING:

Wed., Feb. 18, 2026 at 6:30 PM
Liverpool Public Library
(3rd Wednesdays)

CONTACT:

Rachel Becker, Chair
reb4128@rit.edu
onondagacountylp@gmail.com

ONTARIO

CONTACT:

Nathan Dingey,
Acting County Chair

ORANGE

NEXT MEETING:

Held 4th Thursdays. Location
varies. Contact us for details.

CONTACT:

Juan Ayala, Chair
livefree@juanrayala.com

QUEENS

NEXT MEETING:

Sat., Feb. 14, 2026 at 12 PM
Stamatis Greek
and Mediterranean Restaurant
29-09 23rd Ave., Astoria

CONTACT:

John Clifton, Chair
mrjclifton@yahoo.com

RENSSELAER

NEXT MEETING:

Wed., Feb. 4, 2026 at 6:30 PM
Alexis Diner, North Greenbush
(1st Wednesdays)

CONTACT:

Jennifer O'Connor,
Acting County Chair
joconnor@lpny.org

RICHMOND (STATEN ISLAND)

NEXT MEETING:

Thurs., Feb. 19, 2026 @ 7 PM
@ Coffee and Collectibles
(3rd Thursdays)

CONTACT:

Susan Overeem Cummings,
Chair
susanovereem@gmail.com

SARATOGA

CONTACT:

Naz Garabedien, Chair
nazareth.garabedian
@lawsonproducts.com

SCHOHARIE

CONTACT:

Mason Hovack,
Acting County Chair

SUFFOLK

NEXT MEETING:

TBD
Panera Bread, Deer Park
(usually 4th Thursdays)

CONTACT:

Robert Schuon, Chair
rschuon@mindspring.com

ULSTER

NEXT MEETING:

Mon., Feb. 9, 2026 at 6:30 PM
Hickory BBQ, Kingston, NY
(second Mondays)

CONTACT:

Sam Kniffen, Chair
samkniffen01@gmail.com

LEARN MORE:

www.UlsterLP.org

WAYNE

MONTHLY SOCIAL:

Sat., Feb. 28, 2026 at 10 AM
Yellow Mills Diner
2534 NY-31, Palmyra, NY 14522
(last Saturdays)

CONTACT:

Jim Dayton, Chair
jdayton@lpny.org

LEARN MORE:

lpwaynecounty.org

WESTCHESTER-PUTNAM

NEXT MEETING:

TBD
St. John's Italian Restaurant
915 N Broadway,
White Plains, NY 10603

CONTACT:

Rajib Maitra, Chair
rajib.maitra1@gmail.com

LPNY DIRECTORY

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	COMMITTEE CHAIRS	
<p>Duane Whitmer Chair Daniel Castello Vice Chair Andrew Kolstee Secretary Chance Haywood Treasurer Christopher Skelly Communications Director Mark Axinn Fundraising Director Justin Carman IT Director Richard Purtell Legislative Affairs Director Pietro Geraci Outreach Director Paul Grindle Political Director Catrina Rocco Volunteer Director</p>	<p>Daniel Castello Platform Committee Chair Andrew Kolstee Rules Committee Chair Daniel Castello Strategic Planning Committee Chair</p>	
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