

## **Governor Paterson's State of the State**

Governor Paterson presented the State of the State on Wednesday, January 6, 2009. He talked about the perilous financial situation that New York State faces and said that we all must share in the recovery with courage, hope and action. The Governor's office projects that New York's budget deficit is between \$15 and \$16 billion for the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

It is customary for the State of the State address to signal the agenda and spending priorities ahead of the release of the Governor's budget in mid-January. However, because of the current budget crisis, Governor Paterson released his budget on December 16th - a full month early.

While Governor Paterson stated that his first priority is to balance the budget, he presented several areas in which he plans to move forward: 1) health care, 2) education, 3) economic development or jobs creation; 4) energy and the environment, and 5) community.

Areas where children and youth will benefit include:

- 1) Health Care: The Governor launches a new initiative to address obesity which First Lady Michelle Paterson will lead. In addition, the Governor will introduce legislation to allow 19 to 29 year olds to access their parent's health care coverage at their own expense.
- 2) Education: The Governor proposes establishing early college high schools and expansion of the SAY YES program offering free tuition to students meeting certain standards. He also proposes establishing a NYS Higher Education Loan Program.

Other highlights: The Governor proposes expansion to the Family Health Plus program, a "45 by 15" clean energy initiative, investments in New York's infrastructure, a cap on property taxes, Empire Zone reforms, increases in volunteerism in the state, and reforms to the Rockefeller Drug Laws.

To view the full address and see more specific breakdown of his initiatives, visit the Governor's website at [www.ny.gov/governor](http://www.ny.gov/governor).