

Public Statement

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Response to Governor Cuomo's State of State 2014 Kate Breslin, President and CEO Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy

Governor Cuomo's State of the State address coincides with the 50th anniversary of President Johnson's declaration of our nation's War on Poverty. It is unfortunate that the Governor did not mention this milestone and the challenges ahead of us to achieve it. Growing income inequality is a serious challenge facing New York in 2014.

The Governor said, "It is time to fulfill the State's goal of truly Universal Pre-Kindergarten access for all children." We eagerly await the details on the plan, including an intentional focus on ensuring investment in the program quality improvement needed to generate the results we seek. We look forward to working with the Governor on expanding access to high-quality Pre-K for all children this session and are eager for him to do so with as much attention as he gives to economic development.

We applaud Governor Cuomo for acknowledging the successful launch of among the most efficient and functional Health Exchanges in the country. The New York State of Health has enrolled 265,000 New Yorkers into health coverage since its roll-out October 1, 2013. Now New York must have a Basic Health Program (BHP) for low-income adults who do not qualify for Medicaid and who still find the costs of the Exchange prohibitive. We look forward to language in the Governor's budget proposal that would allow New York to implement a Basic Health Program.

We commend the Governor for committing to update New York's antiquated juvenile justice laws and finally treat children as children. Long overdue, this will bring our juvenile justice system in line with scientific research, best public safety practices and the rest of the country.

The Governor is clearly sensitive to the tax burden faced by New York businesses, but to support tax cuts without addressing high poverty and growing income inequality is wrong. As we mark the 50th Anniversary on the War on Poverty we need to build on the successes of essential public systems that mitigate poverty and its impacts.

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