

## ***A Schuyler Center News Blast***

**January 9, 2014**

### **State of the State Recap Related to Schuyler Center Priorities**

*But whatever the cause, our joint Federal-local effort must pursue poverty, pursue it wherever it exists--in city slums and small towns, in sharecropper shacks or in migrant worker camps, on Indian Reservations, among whites as well as Negroes, among the young as well as the aged, in the boom towns and in the depressed areas.*

*Our aim is not only to relieve the symptom of poverty, but to cure it and, above all, to prevent it.*

—President Lyndon B. Johnson's  
Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union  
January 8, 1964

Governor Cuomo delivered his fourth State of the State Address on January 8, 2014. This address coincided with the 50th Anniversary of Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty. Despite growing income inequality and poverty in New York, the Governor failed to take advantage of this connection to announce a roadmap plan to address poverty.

Most of the Governor's attention and details were spent outlining infrastructure projects and tax cuts and incentives for business. It is important for New York to address employment and fiscal stability, but the Governor made little mention of his interest in families living in or near poverty or New York's growing income inequality. The Governor did address several important initiatives which the Schuyler Center has identified as priorities.

#### **Pre-Kindergarten**

The Governor again stated his support for Pre-K and, although we are very pleased the Governor intends to make full-day Pre-K a reality statewide, we are eager to see the Governor's plan and funding in his forthcoming budget proposal. We are especially interested in ensuring investment in the program quality improvement that is essential to generate the results that the Governor touts and that we all seek. We look forward to working with the Governor on expanding access to high-quality full-day Pre-K this year.

#### **Raise the Age**

We commend the Governor for committing to update New York's antiquated juvenile justice laws. This is long overdue. New York and North Carolina are the only two states in the nation that treat children as young as 16 as adults in the criminal justice system. It is time for New York to recognize that children and youth have unique developmental needs and challenges and should be treated as children and youth in the justice system. The Governor called for a commission to address this

important matter. Advocates will be looking to ensure that the commission convenes and acts swiftly and decisively. Long overdue, policy change in this area has the potential to bring our juvenile justice system in line with scientific research, best public safety practices and the rest of the country.

### **Tax Credits for Renter and Circuit Breaker for Homeowners**

The bulk of the Governor's comprehensive economic development plan focused on incentivizing businesses in New York. The Governor also proposed a renter's tax credit and a property tax circuit breaker, both of which could support low- and middle-income New Yorkers, depending how structured. A circuit breaker, designed to reduce the property tax liability for individuals whose property tax payments represent a large portion of their family's income, has the potential to help low-income New Yorkers who pay property tax. Most New York City households are renters. The Governor proposed a refundable personal income tax credit for renters with incomes below \$100,000. The details - not yet available - will determine to what extent these policies could help the many New Yorkers living at or near poverty.

### **Housing**

Noting increasing rates of homelessness and that, "In 2014, every New Yorker deserves a safe, clean place to live," the Governor articulated a \$100 million commitment to affordable housing.

### **New York Youth Works**

The Governor promised \$16 million for New York Youth Works, a program that provides job training and employment for eligible youth between the ages of 16 and 24. It incentivizes businesses to hire unemployed, disadvantaged youth.

### **Looking forward to Session 2014**

In addition to working on the issues highlighted above, the Schuyler Center will be urging New York to build upon its successful launch of perhaps the most efficient and functional Health Exchange in the country. The New York State of Health has enrolled 265,000 New Yorkers into health coverage since its roll-out on October 1, 2013. Now New York must create a Basic Health Program (BHP) to serve low-income adults who do not qualify for Medicaid, but find the costs of the Exchange prohibitive. We urge the Governor to include language in his proposed budget which will allow New York to implement a Basic Health Program.

Several of New York's political leaders have identified the significant crisis in the State's child care system - inadequate resources for subsidies resulting in lack of access; inadequate resources for quality; challenges with assessing quality; workforce development; and lack of a statewide system. Governor Cuomo did not mention child care in his State of the State message, but we are hopeful that, this year, the Governor will announce a plan for increased investment designed to improve quality and access across the state.

Assembly Speaker Silver has called for improvements in last year's minimum wage law that would accelerate the minimum wage increase and tie it to inflation. The Governor failed to mention the minimum wage in his address. This is an important issue to Schuyler Center and we are eager to work with the Speaker to see this move forward.

For more on the Schuyler Center's policy priorities, please visit [www.scaany.org](http://www.scaany.org). We look forward to working with all of you to identify opportunities to advance progressive policies that promote opportunity for all New Yorkers.