



STATE OF NEW YORK  
**EXECUTIVE CHAMBER**  
ALBANY 12224

DAVID A. PATERSON  
GOVERNOR

December 16, 2008

Dear New Yorkers,

New York is poised at a defining moment in its history. We are faced with the greatest economic and fiscal challenge of our lifetimes.

Wall Street, a pillar of New York's economy, has suffered a series of unprecedented shocks. The financial services sector, which accounts for twenty percent of state tax revenues, may never be the same. Moreover, our broader economy is grappling with a deep recession that promises to be one of the worst in decades, and is expected to cost tens of thousands of New Yorkers their livelihoods.

New York's leaders, including myself, have the duty and responsibility of guiding our state through this difficult period. Despite the obstacles we face, New Yorkers should know that we will not turn our backs on our core priorities. Instead, in these demanding times, we must better focus our limited resources so we can deliver the essential services that we need not just to weather this economic storm, but to build toward future progress.

That being said, adjusting our state budget to reflect this new fiscal environment will be an extraordinary challenge. This Executive Budget begins the difficult process of fundamentally reevaluating both how we manage our government and what the state can afford to spend in a time of plummeting revenues. It seeks shared sacrifice from all New Yorkers and includes reductions across virtually every area of government. It also lays the groundwork for efficiencies and rationality in our operations that will produce a more disciplined and cost-effective state government.

Change is never easy, but it is the only way we can put New York back on the road toward fiscal and economic recovery. There is no doubting the seriousness of the problems we must address and the need to deal with them in a direct and candid manner.

In his inaugural address, President Franklin Roosevelt told a nation in the grips of the Great Depression that now is "the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly." He warned that the American people must not shrink from "honestly facing" the dark reality of the conditions in their country.

Today, we too cannot shrink from the challenges ahead. We must address our new fiscal reality with a seriousness of purpose and candor that will allow us to emerge from this crisis even stronger than before. More than ever, we must have the courage to put politics aside and work together in a frank, honest, and nonpartisan manner for the common good.

Many years from now, New York's leaders will be judged by our response to this historic challenge – whether we made the tough decisions necessary to put our state back on firm financial footing or diverged toward the path of easy answers and fiscal irresponsibility. I am confident that we can come together in a manner befitting the sacred trust that the people of this state have placed in us and that our actions can lead us to prosperity once more. In the end, we will be able to say that in a time of uncommon difficulty, we found a common purpose, and passed this historic test.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David A. Paterson".

David A. Paterson

[www.ny.gov](http://www.ny.gov)