

Dear Mr. Paul Francis,

I read with interest your concern with the large and growing budget gap in New York State. Hopefully you truly have a desire to find the means in closing this gap. I have some suggestions:

1. It is my understanding that teachers in New York State, when they receive their retirement pay, do not have to pay New York State taxes. I, however have to pay New York State taxes on my retirement pay. Since there are many teachers about to retire and there are many teachers that are retired, this incredible gift to the teachers, and not to other residents of New York State, should immediately be rescinded.

2. Again, it is my understanding that numerous counties and civil service employees, employed by both the county and the State government, also do not pay New York State taxes on their retirement pay. I have worked in New York State all my life, and paid New York State taxes all my life, and I currently pay New York State taxes on my retirement income. This GIFT to New York State and other county employees should also be rescinded.

3. All New York State employees must increase their contribution to the Health care system, thereby decreasing the amount that the State is responsible.

4. New York State must go back to the contracts with their Civil Service employees and renegotiate those contracts with regards to New York State responsibility to the retirement fund regarding decreasing New State's contributions and increasing employee contribution. Why am I, a taxpayer responsible for an employee's retirement? Are they responsible for mine?

These and other suggestions will take GUTS to implement and if you are truly serious about reducing budget gaps you should address the real problems associated with the reasons we have these problems. Are you just interested in having Town Hall Meetings without any real object of implementing real changes to the system? Do you have the strength and foresight to tackle the large voting blocs of unions or does the newly elected Governor and his staff do "business as usual" while paying lip service to changes? Oh, by the way, I am a registered Democrat(all my life) and voted for Elliot Spitzer.

If you wish additional suggestions, please feel free to contact me at my email address or if you wish, my home telephone number is: . Thank you for this opportunity and I would like to see if you present these solutions to the proper authorities or just "acting" like you are really serious about this problem or business as usual?

Michael Gatz
631 Madeira Blvd.
Melville, New York 11747