

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Reform Party Winter State Committee meeting**

March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017

(note: for ease of understanding and simplicity these minutes combine the discussion of the Platform & Issues Committee, which technically took place at a separate meeting with the discussion of the state committee meeting, since all members of the platform and issues committee were invited to participate in the platform discussion at the state committee meeting)

#### **Attendance:**

Present in person or by proxy:

Curtis Sliwa, Chairman

John A. Tabacco, First Vice-Chairman

Frank Morano, Secretary

Rosie Rossitto, Treasurer

Darren Yelin

Stephanie Morano

Lawrence Gilder

Victoria Brenker

Maleta Snell

Michael Reape

Curtis Ellis

Alex Garrett

Stephanie Yelin

Patricia Baumann

**10: 47-** Meeting called to order

Sliwa asks Rosie Rossitto, a veteran of the armed forces to lead the group in the pledge of allegiance.

**Quorum-** Party Secretary Frank Morano reports that a quorum is present, either in person or by proxy.

#### **Chairman's Report**

Curtis Sliwa gives a Chairman's report in which he outlines the purpose of today's meeting, namely to write a party platform and conduct normal party business. He emphasizes that the Reform Party is not a cult of personality and that principles are more important than personalities.

Curtis indicates that this is our winter State Committee meeting, one of three meetings required by State party rules. He then entertains a motion to adopt the agenda, which is made by **Frank Morano**. It passes unanimously (14-0). Sliwa then asks for a motion to adopt the minutes of the organizational meeting, which also passes unanimously.

Curtis makes note of our historic legal victory and gives some of the history that took place between the organizational meeting in September and the winter meeting. He emphasizes that "we are not the Reform Party of Ross Perot or Jesse Ventura" but that we're the NYS Reform Party and focused exclusively on NY state issues. He cautions the committee to stay out of national issues and be a party that's open to people that might participate in an anti-Trump march or supporters of Trump. He says we need to be open to the vast majority of free agents out there that feel they've been left out by everyone. He says that our party needs to be careful not to put a platform together that's a carbon copy of either the Republicans or Democrats. "I want people to know they can have a home of their own, where they can freely discuss issues and contribute in a meaningful way." He thanks all of the committee people for participating and makes a special point to acknowledge Frank Morano for doing much of the heavy lifting. He also acknowledges our legal team headed by Richard Luthmann and asks for a round of applause.

**Frank Morano** makes a point to thank Darren Yelin for traveling all the way to Staten Island from Rockland County and mentions that future meetings will take place in other parts of the state but because of Curtis Sliwa's desire to have continued good luck from our first location. He also mentions that Richard Luthmann and Scott Diamond are technically not members of the Reform Party but recommends that they be permitted in the platform writing portion of the meeting (since the platform and issues committee is technically advisory) and points out that they've both filed paperwork to change their registration to Reform, but that it won't take effect until after the general election this year.

There are no objections to Frank's recommendation.

Morano then goes on to submit a motion for a platform consisting of SEVEN different discussions, with printed copies for each committee member. He submits the entirety of it as one proposal. (Morano's initial proposal is attached here as APPENDIX A). He suggests taking to two minutes to review the proposals and invites any questions from the committee.

Morano then calls the committee's special attention to his proposal to have the party support a constitutional convention and points out that it's really the only thing on their that's unique in terms of timing to this year, because of the vote coming in November. He then points out some

of the arguments on both sides of the issue.

**Stephanie Morano** inquires about Frank Morano proposal V.F., which calls for fines for landlords who keep their retail spaces vacant. Frank Morano reiterates that it's just a proposal and explains the rationale is to encourage landlords not to keep properties vacant for prolonged periods of time in order to attract higher paying national tenants.

**Richard Luthmann** points out that the proposal for Term Limits (I.B.) should specify state and city and not national because the rights of states to impose term limits on members of congress has been declared unconstitutional.

Morano responds that because we're going to be interviewing candidates for Federal office as well that we should keep it in.

**Sliwa** suggests that we go through each section and then invite questions and/or debate.

The discussion then begins on Section I, political and electoral reform.

Sliwa further suggests that the language in the platform should illustrate exactly what the problems are and in detail what we're seeking to do.

The consensus of the committee is that we'll send a draft of the platform language to everyone and invite participants to "gin up the language". There's then an informal discussion of the stupidity of the aspects of New York's election law that requires people to wait eleven months before their change in party enrollment is effective.

Curtis then reiterates his strong support for "Initiative & Referendum" and points out that in the states which allow voters to vote directly on propositions that they have higher voter turnout.

**John Tabacco** then suggests that all seven sections of the draft platform be looked at one at a time and then inviting discussion on each. There's no objection to the Tabacco proposal.

There's a discussion about section I: political and electoral reform.

**Richard Luthmann** suggests that the language regarding on the Board of Elections reform should specifically state that it should be a non-partisan, civil service agency.

**Rosie Rossitto** points out that the photo ID requirement as part of the "Same Day Voter Registration" should exclude municipal ID cards, which are available to non-citizens.

**Luthmann** suggests more specific language on ending gerrymandering, specifically "drawn by a non-partisan Commission".

**Lutmann** further raises concern that if Judicial candidates are able to state their positions on issues, that will lead to Judges recusing themselves in countless cases. **Morano** doesn't accept Luthmann's proposal as a friendly amendment, saying that voters have a right to know what their positions are on political issues. The two go back and forth on the merits of allowing judicial candidates to speak out.

**Dante Vitoria** points out that Judges may do anything and that without allowing judicial candidates to state their positions, the rank-and-file will have no idea who they're voting for.

**Curtis Sliwa** asks how we can end the practices of Judges running completely unopposed.

**Morano** states that direct election of Supreme Court Justices (as opposed to the judicial convention process) will go a long way towards making judicial elections more competitive.

Morano then explains the judicial convention process, which he's unable to do without laughing because of what he describes as the absurdity of the convention process.

**John Tabacco** offers a friendly amendment to divide the question so that each section can be voted on individually. **Morano** accepts the amendment.

**Morano** then answers a question from Sliwa seeking explanation of Instant Runoff Voting and after explaining the process says it's designed to eliminate the spoiler effect and produce a winner who is more representative of the community.

**Luthmann** asks for clarification on Proportional Representation (PR). Morano reiterates that the party should simply be on record in favor of "some form" of PR, perhaps similar to what NYC utilized to elect the City Council in the 30s and 40s.

Section I (political and electoral reform) is adopted (15-2) with Gilder and Reape voting "No".

Discussion begins on Section II (fiscal responsibility).

**Scott Diamond** points out that many of the proposals geared towards state and city finances (and office holders) should also apply to Nassau County and other county governments. Sliwa says that the intent of the platform is to apply to all local governments (unless otherwise stated) and says that will be made clear when the language is finalized.

**Rosie Rossitto** asks for clarification on the proposal to gradually replace defined benefit pension plans with 401-K style plans for government workers.

**Frank Morano** explains the intent of the proposal and what it would do.

**Stephanie Morano** talks about her experience working with a pension company and reiterates the prevalence of 401Ks in the private sector.

**John Tabacco** talks about the financial savings (to the taxpayer) of gradually switching from "defined benefit" plans to "defined contribution" plans, while reiterating that current retirees (or those about to retire) will not see any change in their retirement plans. **Tabacco** (who has testified before Congress on this subject) talks about how prevalent massive unfunded liabilities are in government pension plans around the country.

**Dante Vitoria** suggests that people be divided by area of expertise to draft and revise specific language. Morano responds that he will draft language send it to everyone and invite their edits.

**Tabacco** says that this could be his all-time longest email.

**Larry Gilder** says that the only solution to New York's fiscal woes is the legalization and taxation of recreational cannabis.

Sliwa says that this illustrates the importance of supporting "Initiative & Referendum" on issues like that.

**Scott Diamond** says that part of the pension proposal should also include a prohibition on double dipping. There's no opposition to the proposal and Morano accepts the Diamond change as a friendly amendment. **Vitoria** suggests some more specificity in terms of platform language. Several of the committee members talk about some of the more egregious examples of double dipping.

Section II (fiscal responsibility) is adopted unanimously (17-0).

Discussion begins on Section III (the criminal justice system)

**Luthmann** asks if the party should add the decriminalization of marijuana as a specific point. **Sliwa** points out that this is a textbook issue for a voter initiative. **John Tabacco** suggests that the language in this section should include a specific proposal for legalization of marijuana. Sliwa suggests that this could be applied to all currently illegal substances.

**Larry Gilder** says that he believes the country is about to go in a different direction in terms of thinking about legalization of cannabis and says the Reform Party should be on the vanguard of this issue.

**Dante Vitoria** points out the risks of adopting legalization of marijuana as a specific platform point, because it may cause the party to be marginalized. Vitoria also reiterates his support for I&R to decide questions like this. **Tabacco** suggests having our website allow for sample I&R topics.

**Richard Luthmann** suggests that the language on the grand jury process should include "transparency and accountability".

#### BRIEF RECESS FOR TEN MINUTES

Morano makes a motion to allow for the three members of the platform and issues committee, who are not presently members of the State Committee (Luthmann, Diamond and Vitoria) to be permitted to participate fully in the State Committee meeting as voting members, with the same opportunity to speak as the other members and then continues that we pick up consideration of the platform with section III, where the platform committee left off. Motion seconded by Rosie Rossitto and passed unanimously (14-0 S.C. vote).

**Sliwa** and **Stephanie Morano** ask for clarification on "ending mass incarceration". Frank Morano responds that it's more an aspirational goal than a specific policy proposal. **Luthmann** suggests some specific language which might suit that aspirational goal. Sliwa stresses the need for specificity in terms of language.

**Sliwa** asks for clarification and explanation of civil asset forfeiture. **Morano** explains (in detail and with examples) that it's a controversial law enforcement practice in which the government is permitted to claim your money or property even without a criminal conviction. He specifically cites the example of Russ Caswell, a motel owner who had his motel seized by the government even though he wasn't accused of wrongdoing. **Sliwa** talks about his own personal experiences of getting money seized in some of his arrests. **Luthmann** suggests civil asset freeze in lieu of forfeiture.

Section III (criminal justice) passes unanimously (17-0).

**Rosie Rossitto** raises the need for school bus cameras. This is accepted as a friendly amendment.

**Rossitto** also urges that the language regarding reform of transportation related authorities stress the need for local control on issues like speedbumps.

**Sliwa** suggests that rather than have the party stake out a specific position on red light cameras that it would be better decided by a local initiative in a community. **Morano** accepts "allowing communities to vote" on red light cameras as a friendly amendment.

**Sliwa** also suggests that the party's proposal for Citizen Utility Boards could apply to commuters as well. **Morano** agrees but says that it's one of many reforms that can be made.

Section IV is adopted as amended unanimously 15-0 with two abstentions: Tabacco and Vitoria.

Discussion begins on Section V.

**Luthmann** suggests that there should be tax benefits for companies that hire New Yorkers and utilize New York materials.

F. **Morano** accepts a friendly amendment specializing incentives for hiring New Yorkers and/or Americans before others.

**Sliwa** suggests that V.A. (which deals with easing burdensome regulations on small business) should specify some language regarding the reliance of municipalities on ticket revenue and asks for language that seeks to curb ticket quotas.

**Luthmann** proposes outlawing quotas as part of Section V.A. and **Morano** accepts it as a friendly amendment. **Larry Gilder** points to what Andrew Cuomo has done with the state police in this respect.

**Morano** proposes to adopt section V (as amended). **Rosie Rossitto** seconds the motion. It passes 14-0 with three abstentions: Brenker, Tabacco and Vitoria.

Discussion of Section VI begins.

**Sliwa** suggests adding an emphasis on vocational training in schools.

**Rossitto** talks about the problems with charter schools specifically their not taking students with disabilities. She offers to have VI.D, which calls for eliminating the cap on charter schools be replaced with a provision calling for Referendums on education related issues like charter schools and school vouchers. This is accepted as a friendly amendment. **Luthmann** suggests some additional specificity of language.

**Sliwa** suggests that VI. C which calls for making civics instruction a priority be amended to say that civics instruction should be mandatory. This is accepted as a friendly amendment.

**Luthmann** says that the provision requiring a sound basic education should include civics.

**Morano** makes the motion to adopt section VI as amended. Rosie seconds. It's adopted unanimously with three abstentions: Brenker, Tabacco and Vitoria.

Discussion begins on Section VII (other common sense reforms).

**Curtis Sliwa** suggests that this is better suited as the subject of voter initiatives.

**Frank Morano** agrees to withdraw his proposal of section VII in its entirety.

**Richard Luthmann** suggests that the party adopt a platform plank on environmental policy calling for safeguarding NY's natural resources but balancing the need for economic development. **Sliwa** adds that it really doesn't say anything. **Luthmann** makes that motion and **Frank Morano** seconds it. It passes unanimously with three abstentions: Brenker, Tabacco and Vitoria.

**Richard Luthmann** proposes adoption of a platform plank emphasizing the need for energy independence (as part of the environmental section) calling for preference for energy produced in New York State, then the U.S.A then North America. **Sliwa** talks about nuclear power being the perfect sort of issue for a voter initiative.

**Curtis Sliwa** asks for no business.

**Frank Morano** proposes that we formally remove from the state committee, three people who are no longer eligible to serve on it: Marie Speranza, Terry Goldman and Henry Then. Additionally he proposes as part of the same motion that Kyle O'Brien 75<sup>th</sup> A.D. (of New York County), Phillip DePaul 17<sup>th</sup> A.D. (of Nassau County) and Dante Vitoria 47<sup>th</sup> A.D. (of Kings County) be added to the state committee to fill vacancies in their districts. The motion is seconded by **Darren Yelin**. The motion passes unanimously with three abstentions: Brenker, Tabacco and Vitoria.

(the new state Committee list is appendix B).

**Frank Morano** proposes that Richard Luthmann be appointed to the position of Law Chair, as

such his responsibilities will include responding to any legal challenges brought before the party, heading a statewide judicial candidate screening committee and acting as a member of the party's state executive committee. The motion is seconded by **Darren Yelin**. It's passed unanimously with three abstentions.

**Curtis Sliwa** mentions that he neglected to include three platform items when we were discussing that and asks for a motion to reopen the platform for additions and amendments. The motion is made by **Darren Yelin** and seconded by **Rosie Rossitto**.

**Sliwa** talks about the problems with having the New York State Comptroller be the sole trustee of the New York pension fund and talks about the problems that this invites in terms of corruption and conflicts of interest.

**Frank Morano** proposes that the platform call for the comptroller to be made Chair of a Board of Trustees for the pension fund rather than the sole trustee as part of Section II. It's seconded by **Darren Yelin**.

**Sliwa** then talks about the problems with political parties being headed by lobbyists. Several of the committee members point out the possible unintended consequences of preventing lobbyists from being county chairmen and the dangerous precedent it would set for by prohibiting political parties from choosing their own leaders. After discussion, Sliwa withdraws his proposal until a time that it can be more thoughtfully crafted.

The amended platform points are attached here as APPENDIX C.

**Sliwa** asks for old business. There is none.

**Frank Morano** makes a motion to adjourn. Sliwa (again) recognizes Rosie Rossitto for the second.

It's unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting

Respectfully Submitted,

*Frank Morano*

Frank Morano, Secretary

-END-

## APPENDIX A- Draft of Platform Points

- I. **Political and electoral Reform**
  - A. Support for a constitutional convention



- B. Term Limits for all levels of government
- C. Initiative and Referendum in the state of NY
- D. Easing ballot access requirements to run for office in New York State
- E. Streamlining the Board of Elections
- F. Support for Same Day voter registration (including the ability to switch parties) with a valid photo ID
- G. An end to gerrymandering
- H. Reform of elections for State Supreme court: including the elimination of judicial conventions and allowing Judicial candidates to state their position on issues.
- I. Support for instant runoff voting (aka Single Transferrable Vote)
- J. Support for non-partisan municipal elections (similar to how city council special elections are conducted)
- K. Support for some version of proportional representation to elect the state legislature (as the NYC Council was elected from 1937-1949)
- L. Support for campaign finance reform. A proposal similar to Seattle's Democracy voucher, in which every citizen is given vouchers to contribute to a political candidate would be preferred as opposed to NYC's 6-1 matching funds program.
- M. Reform the rules of the state legislature to allow members of the minority party to have more input and authority

## II. **Fiscal Responsibility**

- A. Require all legislation to spell out the source of its revenue
- B. Priority being given to reducing state debt
- C. An end to backdoor borrowing by public authorities
- D. Gradual move away from defined benefit pensions to 401-K style plans
- E. Don't allow the state budget to be used as policy making tool. Make it primarily focused on issues related to the budget.
- F. An end to unfunded mandates
- G. Medicaid Reform- so that the localities aren't forced to shoulder 25% of the state Medicaid burden
- H. Support for zero based budgeting, in which all expenses must be justified for each new period. **Zero-based budgeting** starts from a "**zero base**," and every function within an organization is analyzed for its needs and costs.
- I. A lower sales tax for items completely manufactured in New York State.
- J. Opposition to corporate welfare programs like the Buffalo Billion
- K. a crackdown on sales tax evasion.

## III. **Reform of the Criminal Justice System and criminal justice issues in general**

- A. Opposition to mandatory minimum sentences
- B. Treating drugs and the opioid epidemic as primarily a public health crisis rather than a criminal scourge. Treat simple possession of most drugs as a misdemeanor rather than a felony.
- C. Opposition to civil asset forfeiture
- D. Reducing mass incarceration
- E. Support for conviction integrity units similar to what Brooklyn has done to get wrongfully convicted people out of prison.
- F. Reform of the grand jury process.

- G. Allow inmates in state prisons to be eligible for college courses so they're better prepared for the outside world.
- H. Improving conditions in state prisons with a minimum standard of health, nutritional and safety requirements. Have at least one state prison equipped with hospice care for terminally ill inmates.
- I. Opposition to warrantless wiretapping and preservation of other civil liberties.
- J. Reducing the power of lobbyists and special interests whenever possible.
- IV. Mass transit and infrastructure**
  - A. Establishment of a state infrastructure bank, privately funded and used only for infrastructure products
  - B. Reform of the MTA and other transportation related authorities
  - C. Making improved mass transit more of a priority around the state.
  - D. A modernization program of the state's roads and bridges to bring them into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
  - E. Support using technology to speed up traffic whenever possible e.g. smart lights and cashless tolling
  - F. Opposition to red light cameras
- V. Champions for small business and consumers.**
  - A. Ease burdensome regulations on all businesses particularly small and midsize businesses
  - B. Establishment of citizen utility boards so that consumers finally have a watchdog against the utility companies
  - C. Help small businesses survive by supporting legislation to create fair negotiations of commercial lease renewals, so landlords can't use insane rent hikes to evict dependable and beloved business people.
  - D. Control the spread of chain businesses
  - E. Generous tax breaks for small business as opposed to large multinational chains.
  - F. Give fines or increased taxes to landlords who keep their commercial spaces vacant
- VI. Education**
  - A. Opposition to top down education mandates like "No Child Left Behind" and "Common Core"
  - B. Support on a well rounded education rather than simply standardized tests.
  - C. Making civics instruction a priority, including the history of New York State.
  - D. Eliminating the cap on charter schools.
  - E. Support for a state tax credit for donations to public schools and nonprofit scholarship funds
  - F. Doing away with Last In First Out, so that if there are layoffs, it's not the newest teachers who are automatically removed.
  - G. Mandate that water in state schools is safe to drink and meets minimum levels of safe to drink.
  - H. The true elimination of social promotion.
- VII. Other commonsense reforms**
  - A. Elimination of Daylight Saving Time.
  - B. A gradual transition to the metric system.

APPENDIX B. Current state committee list (after vacancies filled)

1. Curtis A. Sliwa, representing the 59<sup>th</sup> Assembly District in Kings County. 982 East 89<sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11236
2. Mathew J. Mari, representing the 64<sup>th</sup> Assembly District (Kings County portion) in Kings County. 1015 79<sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn, New York 11228
3. James Thompson, representing the 65<sup>th</sup> Assembly District in New York County. 1763 Second Ave, New York, NY 10128
4. Curtis Ellis, representing the 74<sup>th</sup> Assembly District in New York County. 439 East 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Apt 4, New York, NY 10009
5. Alexander Garrett, representing the 24<sup>th</sup> Assembly District in Queens County. 83-27 159 STREET, JAMAICA, NY 11432
6. Andrew McKenna, representing the 108<sup>th</sup> Assembly District (Rensselaer portion) in Rensselaer County. 227 Geiser Road, 2, Wyantskill, NY 12198
7. Victoria Brenker, representing the 61<sup>st</sup> Assembly District in Richmond County. 16 Madison Ave, Staten Island, NY 10314
8. Lawrence Gilder, representing the 61<sup>st</sup> Assembly District in Richmond County. 41 Giordan Court, Staten Island, NY 10303
9. Stephanie Morano, representing the 62<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District in Richmond County. 1026 Sinclair Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10309
10. John A. Tabacco, representing the 62<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District in Richmond County. 120 Bayview Terrace, Staten Island, NY 10312
11. Rosie Rossitto, representing the 63<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District in Richmond County. 208 Rosedale Ave, Staten Island, NY 10312
12. Michael P. Reape, representing the 63<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District in Richmond County. 1131 Manor Road, Staten Island, NY 10314
13. Frank Morano, representing the 64<sup>th</sup> Assembly District (Richmond County

Portion) in Richmond County. 28 Cranford Street, 1B, Staten Island, NY 10308

14. Patricia Bauman, representing the 64<sup>th</sup> Assembly District (Richmond County Portion) in Richmond County. 18 Twombly Ave, 2Fl, Staten Island, NY 10306

15. Darren Yelin, representing the 96<sup>th</sup> Assembly District in Rockland County. 9 Balmoral Drive, New City, NY 10956

16. Stephanie Yelin, representing the 96<sup>th</sup> Assembly District in Rockland County. 9 Balmoral Drive, New City, NY 10956

17. ANDREW DEJOSEPH 19<sup>th</sup> A.D. NASSAU COUNTY. 77 Mulberry Avenue, Garden City, NY 11530

18. MALETA SNELL 127<sup>TH</sup> A.D. ONONDOGA COUNTY. 6131 Cordero Drive, Cicero, NY 13039

19. JILL VITALE 12<sup>TH</sup> A.D. SUFFOLK COUNTY. 35 Jay Court, Northport, NY 11768

20. MICHAEL CASTELLANO, 13<sup>TH</sup> A.D. NASSAU COUNTY. 530 Center Island Road, Oyster Bay, NY 11771

21. Richelli Castellano 13<sup>TH</sup> A.D. NASSAU COUNTY. 530 Center Island Road, Oyster Bay, NY 11771

22. Kyle O'Brien, 832 Sixth Avenue, Apt 3E, New York, NY 10001, 75<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

23. Philip DePaul 192 Hickory Street, Massapequa, NY 11758, 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

24. Dante Vitoria, 2791 Cropsey Avenue, Brooklyn, NY, 11214, 47<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

**VIII. Political and electoral Reform**

- N. Support for a constitutional convention
- O. Term Limits for all levels of government
- P. Initiative and Referendum in the state of NY
- Q. Easing ballot access requirements to run for office in New York State
- R. Streamlining and reform of the Board of Elections including administration of the BOE along non-partisan rather than bi-partisan lines.
- S. Support for Same Day voter registration (including the ability to switch parties) with a valid photo ID, proving citizenship and voter eligibility.
- T. An end to gerrymandering, so that district lines are drawn by a non-partisan commission.
- U. Reform of elections for State Supreme court: including the elimination of judicial conventions and allowing Judicial candidates to state their position on issues.
- V. Support for instant runoff voting (aka Single Transferrable Vote)
- W. Support for non-partisan municipal elections (similar to how city council special elections are conducted)
- X. Support for some version of proportional representation to elect the state legislature (as the NYC Council was elected from 1937-1949)
- Y. Support for campaign finance reform. A proposal similar to Seattle's Democracy voucher, in which every citizen is given vouchers to contribute to a political candidate would be preferred as opposed to NYC's 6-1 matching funds program.
- Z. Reform the rules of the state legislature to allow members of the minority party to have more input and authority

**IX. Fiscal Responsibility**

- L. Require all legislation to spell out the source of its revenue
- M. Priority being given to reducing state debt
- N. An end to backdoor borrowing by public authorities
- O. Gradual move away from defined benefit pensions to 401-K style defined contribution plans.
- P. A prohibition on pension double dipping (those currently double dipping would be grandfathered in).
- Q. Don't allow the state budget to be used as policy making tool. Make it primarily focused on issues related to the budget.
- R. An end to unfunded mandates
- S. Medicaid Reform- so that the localities aren't forced to shoulder 25% of the state Medicaid burden
- T. Support for zero based budgeting, in which all expenses must be justified for each new period. **Zero-based budgeting** starts from a "zero base," and every function within an organization is analyzed for its needs and costs.
- U. A lower sales tax for items completely manufactured in New York State.
- V. Opposition to corporate welfare programs like the Buffalo Billion
- W. a crackdown on sales tax evasion.
- X. Ending the practices of the state comptroller acting as the sole trustee of the New York State pension fund, instead allowing him to be head of a board of trustees.

**X. Reform of the Criminal Justice System and criminal justice issues in general**

- K. Opposition to mandatory minimum sentences
- L. Treating drugs and the opioid epidemic as primarily a public health crisis rather than a criminal scourge. Treat simple possession of most drugs as a misdemeanor rather than a felony.
- M. Support for a state referendum on the decriminalization of cannabis (and other illegal substances).
- N. Opposition to civil asset forfeiture
- O. Reducing mass incarceration
- P. Support for conviction integrity units similar to what Brooklyn has done to get wrongfully convicted people out of prison.
- Q. Reform of the grand jury process with an emphasis on transparency and accountability.
- R. Allow inmates in state prisons to be eligible for college courses so they're better prepared for the outside world.
- S. Improving conditions in state prisons with a minimum standard of health, nutritional and safety requirements. Have at least one state prison equipped with hospice care for terminally ill inmates.
- T. Opposition to warrantless wiretapping and preservation of other civil liberties.
- U. Reducing the power of lobbyists and special interests whenever possible.

**XI. Mass transit and infrastructure**

- G. Establishment of a state infrastructure bank, privately funded and used only for infrastructure products
- H. Reform of the MTA and other transportation related authorities, including reforms allowing for local control on questions like speed bumps.
- I. Making improved mass transit more of a priority around the state.
- J. A modernization program of the state's roads and bridges to bring them into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- K. Support using technology to speed up traffic whenever possible e.g. smart lights and cashless tolling. This includes support for the use of school bus cameras to mitigate causes of traffic congestion, protecting pedestrians and ease enforcement of existing traffic regulations.
- L. Allowing local communities to vote on expansion of, elimination of or implementation of red light cameras
- M. Support for a privately funded watchdog group to be an advocate on behalf of commuters (similar to the Citizen Utility Board model).

**XII. Champions for small business and consumers.**

- G. Ease burdensome regulations on all businesses particularly small and midsize businesses including opposition to using tickets and summonses as a revenue stream (a practice which especially hurts small businesses) and a prohibition on ticket quotas by municipalities.
- H. Establishment of citizen utility boards so that consumers finally have a watchdog against the utility companies
- I. Help small businesses survive by supporting legislation to create fair negotiations of commercial lease renewals, so landlords can't use insane rent hikes to evict dependable and beloved business people.
- J. Control the spread of chain businesses

- K. Generous tax breaks for small business as opposed to large multinational chains.
- L. Give fines or increased taxes to landlords who keep their commercial spaces vacant

**XIII. Education**

- I. Opposition to top down education mandates like “No Child Left Behind” and “Common Core”
- J. Support on a well rounded education rather than simply standardized tests.
- K. Making civics instruction a priority, including the history of New York State.
- L. Allowing for voter referendums on key educational policy related issues like charter schools, school vouchers and teacher tenure.
- M. Support for a state tax credit for donations to public schools and nonprofit scholarship funds
- N. Doing away with Last In First Out, so that if there are layoffs, it’s not the newest teachers who are automatically removed.
- O. Mandate that water in state schools is safe to drink and meets minimum levels of safe to drink.
- P. The true elimination of social promotion.

**XIV. Environmental and Energy policy**

- A. The party supports safeguarding natural resources, while balancing the need for economic development.
- B. The party supports energy independence and pursuing domestic energy production initiatives in the state, the nation and the continent.