

LIPC CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES

Affordable Housing

There is an affordable housing crisis on Long Island. The LIPC is working to develop more affordable homeownership and rentals by conducting an islandwide organizing campaign called YIMBY—Yes In My Backyard. This campaign's goal is to turn out supporters of affordable housing to town board meetings and actions that support new housing on the Island. Please visit the website at www.yimbyli.com and for further questions, contact Lisa Tyson at 516-541-1006 x11 or ltyson@lipc.org.

Alliance for Quality Education

The Alliance for Quality Education (AQE) has quickly become New York State's leading community-based organization in the fight for high-quality public education from pre-kindergarten to high school. A statewide non-profit, AQE unites a coalition of parents, children's advocates, schools, teachers, clergy, and others. For further information, please contact Blanca Villanueva at 516-541-1006 x 20 or via email at blanca@aqeny.org.

Fair Elections

It's time Albany finally returns to government of, by, and for the people—not government bought and paid for by the special interests. The Citizens United Supreme Court case has led to politicians being more and more accountable to corporations and lobbyists who finance their campaigns, and not accountable to the people who elected them. We need real election reform in the form of fair elections. We are fighting for public financing of elections, lower contributions, ending pay-to-play practices, and stronger enforcement and transparency. Contact Dan Fingas at 516-541-1006 x17 or dfingas@lipc.org to get involved.

Internships and Volunteers

The LIPC offers internships and volunteer opportunities. Here, students and volunteers can learn how to conduct research, and organize press events and rallies. Also, you will learn to build relationships through outreach with community members, activists, and politicians. For volunteer opportunities, contact John Delaney at 516-541-1006 x10 or email john@lipc.org and for internships, contact Dan Fingas at 516-541-1006 x17 or email dfingas@lipc.org.

Power Up Communities

Power Up Communities is a green energy campaign which helps homeowners make their homes energy-efficient and more comfortable, while generating good-paying jobs and community revitalization. For a few days of work in your home, you could save between \$900 and \$3,000 each year on your utility bill. These improvements can include measures such as insulation, new home heating systems, or even a gas conversion if natural gas is available in your neighborhood. The contractors we partner with hire local residents to insulate and repair your home, and pay good wages with benefits. You can raise money for your congregation or organization by referring your friends and family to Power Up Communities. For every successful referral that leads to a home energy improvement, you could receive up to \$200. Visit the website at www.powerupcommunities.com or contact Rashad Mitchell at 516-541-1006 x13 or RMitchell@Lipc.org.

LIPC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Town: _____ State: _____ Zip+4: _____
 Org. (if any): _____
 Phone (H): _____ (W): _____

Membership Type: Individual \$35 Family \$45 Contributor \$50
 Low Income \$15 Friend \$100 Other \$ _____

I wish to become a monthly sustaining member.
 My monthly pledge is for: \$100 \$50 \$36 \$12 \$5

To pay with a credit card, fill out the following information:
 Charge to: Visa Mastercard Discover AMEX
 Account #: _____
 Expiration Date: ____/____/____

Make checks payable to LIPC.
 Mail to: LIPC, The Katherine Smith House
 90 Pennsylvania Avenue
 Massapequa, New York 11758



Long Island Progressive Coalition
 90 Pennsylvania Avenue
 Massapequa, New York 11758
 (516) 541-1006 • Fax: (516) 541-2113
administration@lipc.org • www.lipc.org

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LI ACTION

March/April 2014

The Long Island Progressive Coalition is a grassroots community-based organization dedicated to promoting sustainable development, revitalizing local communities, enhancing human dignity, creating effective democracy, and achieving economic, social, and racial justice.



Local Groups: No More Tax Breaks for the Super-Wealthy

Area Community, Labor, Faith-Based Organizations Join Statewide Effort, Point to NY's Worst-in-the-Nation Income Inequality as Need for Investment, Not Tax Benefits for Rich

Area leaders joined a statewide coalition of labor, faith-based and community organizations to push back against Governor Cuomo's proposed tax breaks for the wealthy and well-connected. The groups are calling on local legislators to oppose billions in tax cuts that would benefit the wealthiest New Yorkers, which the governor included in his 2014-15 budget proposal.

Highlighting the stories of area residents who have been directly impacted by past budget cuts, the groups expect to be able to persuade local lawmakers to fight back against giving the wealthiest another tax windfall, especially while New York ranks first in the nation in income inequality. Already, communities have suffered cuts to schools, first responders and other essential services.

New York State has the nation's highest inequality in the nation. Governor Cuomo's tax cuts for the wealthy are funded by budget cuts from us. We want to tell the governor: Change your priorities and put people first. The governor's proposal includes tax cuts to wealthy estates, the elimination of the bank tax and a so-called property tax "freeze." stated Lisa Tyson, director of the Long Island Progressive Coalition.

Under the governor's proposal, estates worth up to \$5.25 million would be tax-exempt, up from \$1 million, and the top tax rate will drop from 16 to 10 percent at a total cost of \$750 million per year. The bulk of this windfall will go to fewer than 200 of the state's wealthiest families. A property tax "freeze" that will cost the state \$1.8 billion over three years would give the largest level of relief to wealthy homeowners while diverting valuable resources from struggling schools and local governments. The budget proposal will reduce taxes for the largest banks in New York, as well as lowering the Corporate Franchise Tax to 6.5 percent, the lowest it's been since 1968. Combined, the cuts for corporations and banks could cost New York \$350 million.

There's no plan to offset the lost revenue of these or other proposed tax breaks.

The groups are calling for reinvestment in jobs and education to spur economic growth and an end to corporate tax loopholes.

Assemblywoman Michaelle Solages stated, "New York has the largest wealth and income gap in the nation. Providing tax breaks for bankers

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WWW.LIPC.ORG

Join the LIPC's Action Alert Email List
 Receive emails regarding the local actions and events of the Long Island Progressive Coalition.

SAVE THE DATE

LIPC 35TH ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON
 MARCH 15TH, 2014
 TIMBER POINT COUNTRY CLUB
 For more information, email john@lipc.org

Local Groups: No More Tax Breaks for the Super-Wealthy

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and billionaires will only continue to widen that gap. The executive budget must reflect opportunity for all New Yorkers by investing in our unfunded educational systems and crumbling infrastructure. The New York State budget should strengthen homeowners programs like the Property Tax Circuit Breaker so homeowners can afford to stay in the Empire State. We need to assuage the issue of inequality.”

Nick LaMorte, CSEA LI Region President, stated “Here in New York, Governor Andrew Cuomo believes that if we just give businesses one more subsidy or allow for one more tax break, they will choose to create jobs. He could not be more wrong. Our way out of this economic malaise is more good-paying jobs created through demand by putting money in the pockets of workers who will be quick to spend it on the products and services they need. Our lives are enhanced when our communities thrive and we have real opportunities for advancement and a better life. But that only comes with an inherent fairness in our tax system and investments in our future through infrastructure improvements, quality public education, affordable higher education and real income equality.

“At the same time that Governor Cuomo is proposing tax cuts for the very rich, Albany is cutting services and jobs for working, middle-

class and low-income New Yorkers,” stated Pastor Joan Polidore. “I run a food bank, I am a Pastor and every month we see more and more people needing help. There are not enough jobs out there and the ones people have do not pay enough money to put food on the table.”

“Our children need resources to succeed, including art, music and sports. The district has been cutting programs over the past few years and my child’s education is suffering,” said Melanie Mejia, a parent of a student in the Brentwood School District. “It is time the governor actually makes education a priority instead of giving tax cuts to corporations and the wealthy. It’s time to give our children what they need and adequately fund our schools instead of banks.”



Making Education a Priority

The Long Island Progressive Coalition and Alliance for Quality Education are mobilizing community members to speak out and take action. In January, two buses from Long Island joined over 1,200 students, parents, educators, and community members in Albany to demand \$1.9 billion in school aid. They rallied and spoke to their local legislators to stop the cuts in their schools and get back resources they have lost. Along with parents, eighty-three state legislators also publicly called on Governor Cuomo to add \$1.9 billion for statewide education in order to get back on track with the Campaign for Fiscal Equity and start closing the gap between rich and poor schools.

Shortly after, Governor Cuomo proposed \$608 million for education. This budget negatively impacts every school district across Long Island and does absolutely nothing to address the huge inequalities between rich and poor schools. His proposed budget does not come close to keeping up with the rising cost in schools. It will mean reducing or eliminating more programs, such as art, music and tutoring which means schools like Central Islip are looking at a \$4 million cut that will have a devastating impact. We need Governor Cuomo and the state legislators to give a \$1.9 billion increase for our schools, instead of planning tax giveaways to banks, wealthy homeowners, and multi-millionaire estate owners.

We agree with the governor that pre-K is one of the most successful strategies and that we should make a real investment and put “our money where our mouth is.” Unfortunately, his proposal does not. Governor Cuomo says that he is putting in place a \$1.5 billion program for pre-K but, in reality, it is only a \$500 million program. This year, we would only receive \$100 million which only covers about 8,000 of the 225,000 four-year-olds in the state. This plan does not

come close to covering Universal pre-K. There is supposed to be an increase of \$100 million for the next five years, accumulating to \$500 million. If received, this amount is simply not enough to cover the need of the youngest of our students in New York State.

Long Islanders are taking action to make a difference. They are attending lobby visits, writing letters to their local legislators, and holding press events. On March 12, they are getting on a bus to Albany to continue the fight for quality education. Our children need resources to succeed. It is time to give our children what they need and adequately fund our schools. It is time the governor actually makes education a priority. Every child deserves a “sound basic education.” It is their right under the state constitution.



Rep. Bishop, Others Oppose Fast-Track Free-Trade Pacts

Rep. Tim Bishop joined union leaders, environmentalists and other activists on January 23 to call on Congress to reject President Barack Obama’s request for fast-track approval of future free-trade agreements.

Fast-track approval prohibits Congress from making changes to trade deals once they’ve been agreed to by the United States and foreign countries. Senators and House members must vote up or down.

Bishop (D-Southampton) was among approximately 150 House members who signed a letter to Obama saying they oppose the fast track, which was first granted to President Richard Nixon in 1973.

Other local letter signers were Reps. Steve Israel (D-Huntington) and Carolyn McCarthy (D-Mineola).

Reps. Peter King (R-Seaford) and Gregory Meeks (D-Queens) told *Newsday* on January 23 they back the fast track. Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) is opposed, and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) is undecided.

The Obama administration is negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) free trade agreement with about a dozen countries in Asia and South America. Together, they represent about 40 percent of the world’s gross domestic product, the sum of all goods and services produced.

“I urge my colleagues in Congress to do something, to see to it that we help to create an economy that creates good, solid, middle-class jobs,” Bishop told about 60 people at the offices of the Long Island Federation of Labor in Hauppauge. “This agreement takes us in the opposite direction,” he added, referring to the TPP.

Supporters of the fast track and TPP shot back that trade deals boost U.S. companies’ sales and support millions of domestic jobs.

David Thomas, trade policy vice president at the Business Roundtable, a group of chief executives of large U.S. corporations, said the TPP and another trade pact, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment

Partnership, “will open markets with nearly 1 billion consumers for U.S. companies and workers.”

These trade pacts likely would be scuttled if Congress doesn’t adopt fast-track legislation, some experts said, because of the hyper-partisanship in Washington.

Economists generally back free trade, arguing that by eliminating import barriers, nations can grow their economies.

John A. Rizzo, chief economist at the Long Island Association business group, said on January 23 international trade fosters increased competition, and thus lowers prices for both consumers and businesses. However, he also said some companies wouldn’t be able to withstand greater competition and likely would lay off workers and in some cases, shut down.

Rizzo said, “There are costs and benefits to free trade; it’s not a slam dunk.”

At his news conference, Bishop was joined by eight unions, the Long Island Progressive Coalition and the local chapter of MoveOn.org.

Michael Gendron, executive vice president of Local 1108 of the Communications Workers of America, criticized the secrecy surrounding trade negotiations. “It will take us years,” he said, “to find out what the impact of [TPP] will be.”



MARCH/APRIL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

LIPC Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 4th at 7:45pm
90 Pennsylvania Ave., Massapequa

Fair Elections Lobby Day in Albany

Tuesday, March 11th
Contact Dan Fingas
for more information concerning
this event at dfingas@lipc.org
or 516-541-1006 x17

Education Lobby Day in Albany

Wednesday, March 12th
Contact Blanca Villanueva
for more information concerning
this event at blanca@aqeny.org
or 516-541-1006 x20

LIPC Great Books Club Meeting

Wednesday, March 12th
Book Revue, Huntington
The poetry of Seamus Heaney
Poem Selections

LIPC 35th Anniversary Luncheon

Saturday, March 15th at 11am
Timber Point Country Club, Oakdale

Huntington Chapter Meeting

Wednesday, March 19th at 5:30pm
Cinema Arts Centre Skye Room,
Huntington

Patriot Games Forum

Thursday, March 28th at 7:00pm
Huntington Public Library,
Main Street, Huntington

LIPC Board Meeting

Tuesday, April 1st at 7:45pm
90 Pennsylvania Ave., Massapequa

LIPC Great Books Club Meeting

Wednesday, April 9th
Book Revue, Huntington
George Orwell’s Essay/Memoir Piece
“A Homage to Catalonia”

Huntington Chapter Meeting

Wednesday, April 16th at 5:30pm
Cinema Arts Centre Skye Room,
Huntington

Patriot Games Forum

Thursday, April 24th at 7pm
Huntington Public Library,
Main Street, Huntington

FOR UPDATED EVENTS, OR FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT WWW.LIPC.ORG.