



*Transcript of Andrew Cuomo's Video Remarks Detailing New NY Agenda*

Hello, I'm Andrew Cuomo. I have the great honor to serve you, the people of our State, as your lawyer, your advocate, your Attorney General.

Every single day for the past three years, I have gone to work with one mission: to represent the people – Period. To fight for you, no matter how powerful the foe, no matter how long the odds.

You have welcomed me into your homes. I have met your families. I have learned about your problems and your challenges. I understand that we are in a difficult time, even a frightening time. The economic collapse has wreaked havoc in too many lives. Life savings have been lost, jobs are shaky, home values have plummeted, and with it dreams for retirement, college tuitions, and a nest egg to rely on.

Reckless bankers exploit the economy and working families are paying the price. Now Wall Street gets bonuses and taxpayers get the bill. It's just not right and it's not fair.

To make matters worse, Manhattan's Wall Street debacle is matched only by Albany's State Street debacle. Our state government in Albany is disreputable and discredited.

New York State is upside down and backwards; high taxes and low performance. The New York State government was at one time a national model. Now, unfortunately, it's a national disgrace. Sometimes, the corruption in Albany could even make Boss Tweed blush.

In my opinion, politicians of both parties, Democrats and Republicans, share the blame. Both are guilty of playing partisan politics and bringing New York State to the brink.

Because I believe so deeply in the mission of government, I am so troubled by its failure. The Declaration of Independence says when government fails, the people have the right to replace it. Well, New York State government has failed and the people have the right, indeed the people have the obligation, to act.

My campaign is this simple: I represent the people of the great State of New York and we want our government back.

If we are smart, we grasp the opportunity presented by this crisis — we seize the day, *carpe diem* —and finally develop the political will to reform Albany. We must use this moment to reorganize the government, reform its ethics and restructure its finances, to solve the problems we have ignored for too long.

The path we must follow is clear. The time for baby steps is over. We must make New York State the economic capital of the world once again. We must overhaul our government, clean it up, pare it down and make it work.

I have a bold new approach I call the **New NY Agenda**. It is a plan based on hard economic realities, a demand for performance, insistence on a clean government, and a mobilized citizenry to make it all happen.

We need to get the State's economy running and to do that we need to make the government function again. Gridlock and partisanship must give way to competence and integrity.

My ***Clean Up Albany Plan*** will enact strict new ethics laws, require full disclosure of all legislators' outside income, and have a real independent monitor, because self-policing is an oxymoron. I will also propose new campaign finance laws and an independent redistricting commission so incumbent politicians actually face competition. The influence of lobbyists and their special interests must be drastically reduced with new contribution limits. I will also spearhead a Constitutional Convention — a People's Convention — to rewrite the rules, because we are just plain tired of waiting for the New York State Legislature to act.

At the same time, we need to get the State's fiscal house in order and start living within our means. Government is not immune from the slowing economy. Just like every company and family in the State has done, the government must cut costs. Raising taxes is not an option — period. Sometimes the answer is just “no.” People will vote with their feet and leave. We are in a financial emergency. We must act that way and we must get our fiscal house in order. My plan will cap state spending and freeze state taxes. I also propose to freeze salary increases for state workers. I respect the state workers and I respect their unions, but we simply can't afford to pay benefits and pensions that are out of line with economic reality.

Reducing State spending is the first step. We must also stop the crush of local government spending by imposing a cap on rising property taxes. My cap would be two percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is less. Taken together, these steps would be a major effort to right the financial ship of the State.

Next, the world has changed. The economy has transformed. We must now resize government to be right-sized for today. Every company and family has gone through it. Government must spend less and operate better. There is plenty of waste to cut and service to improve. Not since 1927, with Governor Al Smith, have we really overhauled our government. I want to try a different approach.

I want to bring in the best private sector minds to reorganize the state's 1,000 agencies, authorities and commissions with a mandate of at least a 20 percent reduction and to reinvent our government for a new century.

I want to work to consolidate the 10,000 local governments across the State — the towns, villages and special districts — that drive our home property taxes through the roof with their duplication and waste.

We need to make New York the jobs capital of the country, putting New Yorkers back to work now and maximizing opportunities in the innovation economy. Our economy is hurting, but we especially need to address the long-term problems of Upstate New York. To help put New Yorkers back to work, I propose the ***New York Works Plan***, a new jobs tax credit to give corporations a tax credit of up to \$3,000 for every unemployed New Yorker hired into a new job.

I also propose reorganization of our economic development efforts. We have spent billions in tax benefits and grants through dozens of programs and a myriad of uncoordinated state agencies. Once again, we are just not getting our money's worth. We must restructure our approach into coordinated regional strategies investing in cluster economies. That's what works.

I will create a State infrastructure bank to help fund and better coordinate public works investment in our State. I will orient our health care institutions and academic institutions to be high tech job generators in this exciting, new innovation economy. And we will make New York more competitive by reducing the high costs of doing business in New York. The essential job of government is to facilitate, not frustrate, job development.

We must also appeal to Washington. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan was right. We still contribute more in tax dollars than we get back. While we respect our role in Federalism, Washington must understand Wall Street was our financial engine and we need help.

I do not support the current plans for the state to borrow as much as \$6 billion to pay operating expenses. To me, it misses the point of this critical moment. We must reduce costs, not raise them. I also oppose the current proposal to appoint a financial review board. Democracy works because people elect officials who are accountable to the people. I will not delegate my responsibility to make the tough, but essential, financial decisions.

I will be discussing new policy directions for the State over the next several months. My ***New York Leads Agenda*** will focus on new education, environment and energy policies, among others. We need substance, not rhetoric; reality based, not politically based, proposals; and we need someone who can actually get it done in Albany. There is no more time for talk and posturing. It's time for action and progress.

I want you to know my beliefs.

I am fiscally prudent and socially progressive.

I believe in protecting a woman's right to choose.

I believe in marriage equality.

I believe Wall Street needs serious ongoing regulation.

I believe public education is the new civil rights battle and I support charter schools.

I believe global warming and climate change are real threats to our planet.

I am against the death penalty.

I believe discrimination still exists in society and we must fight it in every form.

I believe women still face a glass ceiling that must be shattered.

I believe we need to attract a new generation of the best and brightest to public service and I believe that government can be a source of inspiration, not degradation.

I believe government can be a positive force for change. I have been part of governments that made this State and this nation better. I believe we can do it again.

Mine is a much different approach to New York government, and I want a different kind of campaign.

I want to be the candidate of the people. Let my opponents play their old style politics with party bosses and endorsement deals. I want to run my campaign the way I ran my office for the past three years — I work for you, directly. I will reach out and engage reasonable Democrats, Republicans, and Independents; people turned off and tuned out to politics.

I will use this campaign to build a coalition for change and change comes from the people — a coalition that wins a campaign in November and goes on to change our government in January.

I will reach out to people of all parties and stripes to sign on to my New NY Agenda. We are not first Democrats, Republicans or Independents. We are first New Yorkers and we must act that way.

Also, my plan doesn't wait for January to start our reform movement. We want to know how the candidates for the State legislature are going to vote on key issues and we want to know now. Let's make this election a litmus test for change. While I believe we need radical reform and the status quo has got to go — on both sides of the political aisle — I also believe there are many good people currently in state government who will respond to new, principled leadership.

As Attorney General, I have brought together Democrats and Republicans to pass groundbreaking legislation attacking a critical issue — the proliferation of over 10,000 local governments across the State.

They had been trying to pass that law for 20 years. And we actually did it.

Let's learn from the past. If we polarize during the campaign, we only doom the next government to gridlock. Let's stop the cycle. I want to generate a positive dialogue and a unifying approach. I don't wage a campaign against anyone or against anything, but rather, a campaign for something: for competence, for integrity, for reform, and for the people.

It's not going to be easy. This decay didn't happen overnight and it won't be fixed in a day.

We will be taking on very powerful special interests, which have much to lose. We must change systems and cultures long in the making. But I know we can do it. We have taken on powerful forces before and we have won.

I promised you when I was elected that I would fight corporate fraud on Wall Street and government fraud in Albany —and we did.

Together we have done pretty well fighting for the people. Look at what we have accomplished just over the last three years in the Attorney General's Office.

We brought fairness to the big bankers who were going to take outrageous bonuses paid for by taxpayers after bringing our economy to its knees.

We took on the abusive health care companies ripping off billions of dollars from consumers.

We reformed the nation's student lending industry.

We took on wasteful school districts on Long Island and the \$500,000 school superintendents.

We brought sunlight to Albany pork barrel spending.

We cleaned up decades of corruption in our state pension fund, where we recovered over \$100 million.

Last year, we led the nation with the best Medicaid Fraud Unit.

We took on corrupt politicians in Albany — Democrats and Republicans.

We fought the good fight and we won. For me it's all about getting results, it's all about getting things done. Not just talking about it, but actually doing something about it.

As I hope you have seen, I don't run from a problem. I run at it. In my 20s, I started a new approach to deal with the homeless problem. I built housing and provided support services that gave the homeless the help they needed and saved money for the taxpayer.

In my 30s, I took on the challenge of reinventing the Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD") — the most dysfunctional Federal Agency — and brought competent management to a \$30 billion bureaucratic mess.

I've passed numerous laws with the United States Congress. I've been in private business, I've worked all over the world and I know how to get things done. I know how to manage. I know how to bring people together. And I know the people of this great State. And I know we can make New York a great comeback story, leading the nation once again.

And sure it's hard to comeback. I saw it in my own life. A few years ago I ran for Governor and I lost, and I then went through a very difficult time in my personal life. It was a public humiliation. People said it was over for me, they said my public service career was finished; there was no way I could come back. Some days even I thought they were right. Well, it wasn't easy, but I worked hard. And with the help of true friends and my family I built back. And with the compassion and empathy of New Yorkers, you gave me a second chance.

So yes, I know it will be hard but I also know we can do it. And I certainly know one thing for sure: we won't make excuses, we won't take no for an answer, we won't turn on our own, and we won't give up. It's not what we do because it's not who we are.

We are New Yorkers.

We will make New York State the Empire State once again. We won't fail. There are 19 million reasons why we can't fail.

I have three great reasons at home — Cara, Mariah, Michaela — my three girls (15, 15 and 12). I want New York to work for them as it worked for me. I don't want them to move away to find their future. I want to leave them a home that is better, fairer, stronger, safer, and sweeter than ever before. And their home is New York.

I think I can help and that's why today I announce my candidacy for the Governor of the State of New York.

My campaign is not going to be about me — but we. We the people formed the government. We the people must reform the government.

I need you to join the team to change Albany. I will be all over this great state in each of our 62 beautiful counties to organize a citizen coalition to take back our government.

This State is at a crossroads. Sometimes to see the future we must remember the past. Today we must remember who we are as New Yorkers. Remember first the great assets of New York. As HUD Secretary, I worked in every state in the nation and I've seen what all the other states have to offer. Not one has anything over New York State: our history, our diversity, our beauty — the Adirondacks, Long Island beaches, Thousand Islands, Finger Lakes; our legacy of leadership — from Hamilton to Roosevelt; our history of reform—from the women's movement to the environmental movement; and, our superb academic, health care, manufacturing, finance and agriculture industries.

We do it all and we have it all.

Remember, as New Yorkers, our strength is in our unity. Yes, this is a vulnerable moment for our State. And yes, we have real problems. But it is our response to these problems that will determine our destiny. I know we are frustrated and maybe angry and there will be those who seek to exploit our fears — voices of darkness and division. But I also know that this is the time to be smart, not angry; positive, not negative; and to unify, not divide.

Yes, we are diverse as a State — racially, religiously, and geographically. And yes, that proves challenging at times. But our diversity is also our source of strength, not weakness. Our State was founded on inclusion, not exclusion; *E Pluribus Unum* — out of many, one — that's our founding premise and our enduring promise.

Let's use this moment to appeal to each other's better angels. Don't let them divide us. Let us come together stronger than ever before. We've done it before; we will do it again.

In closing, remember that it was not always this way. There was a time when New York State government was a symbol of integrity and intelligence and a source of pride. There was a time when this State led the nation in job development and new economies; there was a time when we dreamed big and acted smart; a time when we believed in us.

That time doesn't have to be our yesterday. It can be our tomorrow, if we start building a *New NY* today — a New York that shines brighter still, for my family and for yours. I know we can do it. I know we will do it — together.

Thank you for listening.