

News from Attorney General Andrew Cuomo

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ATTORNEY GENERAL CUOMO BRINGS HIS GOVERNMENT  
CONSOLIDATION PROPOSAL TO  
ROCHESTER

State's Patchwork Quilt of Over 10,500 Governmental Entities Buries  
Residents with  
Nation's Highest Taxes and Outdated Services

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Cuomo Joined by Thomas Golisano, State and Local Leaders

ROCHESTER, NY (February 12, 2009) - Attorney General Andrew M. Cuomo was in Rochester today to outline his legal proposal that gives communities across the state the power to reform local governments. Cuomo was joined by Thomas Golisano and local leaders at the B. Thomas Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

Cuomo has been traveling throughout the state to discuss his plan with local leaders, academics, and government reform groups. As the current fiscal climate continues to financially squeeze communities and residents across the state, Cuomo's proposal is designed to cut government waste and reduce taxes. Currently, the state is home to over 10,500 governments that saddle residents with the nation's highest taxes and leaves the state with layers of antiquated government entities and special districts. Cuomo's comprehensive legislative plan will streamline the often Byzantine and cumbersome process of consolidating local governmental entities, including the myriad special districts across the state. The proposal will not mandate consolidation; rather, it restructures the law to empower citizens and local governments to make the decisions themselves.

"I have been traveling the state to speak with citizens, advocacy groups, and local leaders about reforming our government and reducing the tax burden on New Yorkers," said Attorney General Cuomo.

“Especially during these tough economic times, we should demand the same efficiency from our government as we demand from our corporations. When people everywhere are paying more, working harder, and getting less for it, it is our responsibility to make sure that our government is operating as resourcefully as possible.”

In all, there are more than 10,500 governmental entities imposing taxes and fees across New York State. This includes towns, villages, districts, and special districts such as water, sewer, and lighting districts.

As the state’s chief legal officer, Attorney General Cuomo is often tasked with advising local governments on the laws regulating them. It is clear that current laws are filled with inconsistencies, and complexities making meaningful reform unattainable.

Given the current fiscal crisis New York is facing, the option to reorganize governmental entities allows communities the ability to provide vital services in a more efficient manner. In some cases, consolidation or dissolution may be necessary to reform government to meet the unique needs of each community. Current law, however, is unable to solve the problem because it is inconsistent, poses legal barriers, and includes anachronisms that make operational reform virtually impossible.

Attorney General Cuomo’s proposal has already received support from leaders statewide.

Cuomo continued, “I am pleased to be here at RIT today, with Tom Golisano and Rochester’s leaders, to have the opportunity to discuss my plan to reform our state government and reduce the cost of living throughout New York.”

Thomas Golisano said, “I have been a strong proponent of government reform in New York for many years. We have outgrown our current structure of government, which has made New York too expensive for families and businesses alike. Attorney General Cuomo’s plan is precisely what we need right now. It is an innovative proposal that will help reduce the overbearing tax burden in this state, and I endorse it. Now, we need to see his plan enacted into law and Responsible New York will work to make that happen.”

Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks said, “As public officials, our number one priority is to protect the taxpayers of New York State and ensure that their dollars are being spent as efficiently as possible. I’m glad he came to Monroe County today and I support Attorney General Cuomo’s plan to empower taxpayers to make their own decisions regarding the size and scope of their local government entities. This

intelligent and unique approach will allow municipalities to consider consolidating government services, potentially saving taxpayers millions of dollars.”

Rochester Mayor Robert Duffy said, “The reason people are leaving New York State and not moving here is high property taxes and its the multiple layers of government that are primarily driving those taxes. We need to shrink government down to its right size. I applaud Attorney General Andrew Cuomo's efforts to accomplish this goal.”

New York State Senator Joe Robach said, “Anything that we can do during these challenging times to make good policy that will provide local governments the opportunities and tools to deliver services more efficiently and in a more cost effective manner with a benefit to the taxpayers is always good. I'd like to thank Attorney General Andrew Cuomo for his work on producing legislation that will streamline existing processes and eliminate inane inconsistencies in the law, thereby making it easier for governmental entities to consider additional consolidation measures.”

New York State Assemblyman Joseph D. Morelle said, “Our hard-working families, faced with financial uncertainty and job insecurity at levels not seen in generations, are finding ways to save money and adjust their lifestyles to these new economic realities. Governments at every level should do the same. Attorney General Cuomo’s initiative is a bold step toward making long overdue and critical changes to the way we do business in New York State.”

New York State Assemblyman David Koon said, “New York has more governing entities than all of the countries in Europe. We need to look at consolidations in all levels to save taxpayer dollars in our state.”

For more information about Attorney General Cuomo’s proposal and to view an interactive map detailing special districts in New York state by county, visit [www.oag.state.ny.us](http://www.oag.state.ny.us)

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