



March 24, 2014

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Governor Cuomo,

We are encouraged by your budget which calls for increasing the New York estate tax exemption from \$1 million to match the federal estate tax exemption at \$5.34 million and lowering the top tax rate from 16 percent to 10 percent. This change is much needed relief for small business owners and individuals in New York who are currently forced to grapple with one of the most burdensome state death taxes in the country.

New York is currently one of only 19 states that impose an additional tax at death. Forbes recently listed New York as a place "Not to Die" in 2014 because of its high death tax. New York's low estate tax exemption of \$1 million and high rate of 16% make it one of the most confiscatory in the country. In New York, even a middle-income family with a modest home and retirement savings can easily surpass the \$1 million exemption. A New York resident could move only a few states away to New Hampshire or to any of the 32 states that don't tax death to avoid a state death tax altogether.

Your proposed reform of the estate tax comes at a critical time, as states have been moving quickly in recent years to eliminate or reduce the burden of their death taxes. In the past four years, Ohio, Indiana, North Carolina, and Tennessee have all eliminated their state death taxes. This year, Maryland and Minnesota are both moving to increase their state estate tax exemptions.

In order to remain competitive, New York would be best served by fully eliminating their state death tax. Simply put: death should not be a taxable event. It makes no sense to force a grieving family to pay a tax on their loved one's property. Increasing the New York estate tax exemption and lowering the rate is a step in the right direction towards this end.

Your proposal to reform New York's estate tax is a common sense improvement that will help grow New York's economy by keeping business owners, workers, and retirees in the state. We look forward to working with you this month to see this important policy change through.

Sincerely,

**Jim Martin**  
Chairman,  
60 Plus Association



**Douglas K. Woods**  
President,  
AMT – The Association For  
Manufacturing Technology



**Ed Orlet**  
Vice President of Government  
Affairs,  
National Association of Electrical  
Distributors



**Christian A. Klein**  
Vice President of Government  
Affairs and Washington Counsel,  
Associated Equipment Distributors



**Kirk McCauley**  
Service Station Dealers of America  
and Allied Trades (SSDA-AT)



**Palmer Schoening**  
Executive Director,  
Family Business Coalition



**Joshua Reap**  
Director of Government Affairs,  
ABC, Empire State Chapter



**Jonathan Melchi**  
Director of Government Affairs,  
Heating, Air-Conditioning &  
Refrigeration Distributors  
International (HARDI)



**Paul Fiore**  
Director, Government Affairs,  
Automotive Aftermarket Industry  
Association



**Will Brown**  
Government Relations Manager,  
National Utility Contractors  
Association



**Jim Rowland**  
Executive Vice President,  
Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of  
America



**Ralph Bombardiere**  
Executive Director,  
New York Association of Service  
Stations & Repair Shops, Inc



**Jay Perron**  
Vice President, Government  
Relations and Public Policy,  
International Franchise Association



**Dan Hilton**  
Director of Government Relations,  
American Supply Association



**Daniel Fisher**  
Vice President Legislative Affairs,  
Aeronautical Repair Station  
Association



**Marta Gates**  
Director of Operations,  
WMDA Service Station &  
Automotive Repair Association



**Roy Littlefield**  
Executive Vice President,  
The Tire Industry Association



**Tim Phillips**  
President,  
Americans for Prosperity



**Harry Alford**  
President, CEO,  
National Black Chamber of  
Commerce



**J. Barry Epperson**  
General Counsel,  
Associated Wire Rope Fabricators



**Grover Norquist**  
President,  
Americans for Tax Reform



**Tom Schatz**  
President,  
Council for Citizens Against  
Government Waste



**John Tate**  
President,  
Campaign for Liberty



**Scott Jones**  
CEO,  
Forest Landowners Association



**Brandon Arnold**  
Vice President of Government  
Affairs,  
National Taxpayers Union



**Lawson Bader**  
President,  
Competitive Enterprise Institute



**Andrew Moylan**  
Senior Fellow,  
R Street Institute

