



March 2024

Dear Policymakers:

PEF greatly appreciates the strong support from all of New York's elected leaders as we work collectively to "Fund Our Future" and deliver the quality programs and services New Yorkers need and deserve. While we have made great strides, much more needs to be done to protect our most vulnerable citizens and to build the capacity to deliver needed services to all New Yorkers. See below for an outline of PEF's Priorities for the 2024-25 State Budget:

Issue	Impact	Solution
Address Persistent State Workforce Shortage	<p>Despite the significant actions taken in the 2023 Legislative Session, the state continues to struggle to attract and retain staff. This has resulted in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The closure of more than 120 state-operated residences for the developmentally-disabled - Proposal to close up to 5 correctional facilities with 90 days notice - Proposal to transition SUNY Downstate hospital services and staff to Kings County Hospital <p>In 2022, New York spent \$1.35 billion to pay 22 million hours of overtime to meet its staffing needs.</p> <p>Public service has become a training opportunity, not a career destination for today's workforce.</p> <p>The state continues to spend additional resources holding new exams, vetting, onboarding and training new staff as the attrition rate grows.</p>	<p>Tier 6 Reform</p> <p>The State needs to provide a greater incentive to attract and retain new and career employees by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing employee contributions - Reducing the final average salary calculation from 5 years to 3 years - Increasing the pension factor to 2% for all years at 20 years of service (same as Tier 4) - Allowing career employees to retire without penalty after age 55 with 30 or more years of service - Eliminate OT compensation from calculation of employee contributions <p>Prohibit "Bullying" and "Abusive Conduct" in the Workplace (S.3065 by Sen. Ramos/A.8934 by Asm. Bronson)</p> <p>Uniform standards are currently absent for identifying workplace bullying and abusive conduct. While sexual harassment is regulated, other harmful behaviors affecting productivity and worker retention remain unaddressed. PEF recommends the passage of legislation that sets clear standards for inappropriate workplace activities and requires educating employers and employees on those standards to foster healthy and productive workplace cultures.</p> <p>Support Executive Budget Proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate Lag Payroll Program (S.8305/A.8805 - Part Q) • Expanded Authority for DOL Enforcement (S.8305/A.8805 – Part L) • Dedicated Resources for DOL Enforcement (S.7818) <p>Oppose Executive Budget Proposal:</p> <p>End COVID Sick Leave (S.8306/A.8806 – Part M)</p>

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Oppose Prison Closures with 90 Days	<p>The Executive has the power to close any facilities with one year notification to staff. Due in part to the on-going workforce shortages at DOCCS, the Governor is proposing to close up to 5 correctional facilities with only 90 days' notice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current law requires a one-year notice to ensure affected people and communities have time to plan • No notice has been forwarded to any affected incarcerated individuals; staff or communities • There is not transparency or consultation occurring regarding these closures 	<p><u>Oppose Executive Budget Proposal:</u> Close up to 5 facilities within 90-day expedited timeline (S.8305/A.8805 – Part D)</p>
Reject SUNY Downstate Transformation Plan	<p>The decades-long starvation initiated by former Governor Cuomo at SUNY Downstate has resulted in operating deficits and dilapidated facilities despite the demonstrated need for specialized care for the residents in the Brooklyn. It is clear that resources are not the issue as New York state spends billions in taxpayer dollars to support the operating and capital needs of private hospitals across the state. We need to fund our public hospitals so that they can continue to deliver services to their communities.</p>	<p><u>Oppose SUNY Chancellor King's Proposal:</u> Reject the Chancellor's proposal to close the current SUNY Hospital building and transition those inpatient services and some of the staff to a new "public" wing at Kings County Hospital</p>
Interstate Nurse Licensure Compact	<p>Most of the participating states have significantly lower licensure requirements than New York. New York should be proud of its high standards, including the "BSN in 10" and lowering those standards simply to allow out-of-state nurses to practice in New York should give us all pause.</p> <p>There is also simply no evidence that the states that have entered into the Compact have seen improved patient outcomes or improved staff-to-patient ratios.</p> <p>Contrary to the intent, entering the Compact may lead to outmigration of nurses from New York to other states which could further exacerbate the current staffing shortage.</p> <p>In the end, there are no shortcuts for developing the workforce we need.</p>	<p><u>Oppose Executive Budget Proposal:</u> NY Entry into the Interstate Nurse Licensure Compact (S.8307/A.8807 – Part R)</p> <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enact a nurse preceptor/mentorship program to support new nurses (Bill introduction pending) • Preferred entry for nurses into SUNY/CUNY programs to meet "BSN in 10" (Bill introduction pending) • Expand nurses staffing committee law to include other state agencies (A.7635 by Asm. Gunther)

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Address OPWDD Closures and Develop a Longer-Term Plan to Address On-Going Housing and Staffing Shortages	<p>The state is seeking to expand affordable housing as it continues to close state-operated residences for the developmentally disabled.</p> <p>Over the past several years, more than 120 OPWDD-operated residences have closed or suspended services due to chronic staffing shortages, expired leases, and dilapidated facilities.</p> <p>The state needs to ensure that everyone, especially the developmentally disabled, has access to housing.</p>	<p><u>Establish a Facilities Improvement and Expansion Plan</u></p> <p><i>BUDGET REQUEST: \$30 Million to Renovate and Acquire Residences</i></p> <p>Securing affordable housing is a problem for many New Yorkers and PEF supports efforts to address those concerns. It is for this reason that we must dedicate funds to address the continued closure of state-operated residences for individuals with developmental disabilities and allocate additional resources to acquiring new state-operated facilities to address the current backlog.</p> <p><i>POLICY REQUEST: Semi-Annual Report on Staffing at State-Operated Residences</i></p> <p>In order to understand the gravity of the problem, a policy requiring OPWDD to report on its current and prospective residential program is required. PEF supports legislation to assess staffing and other issues causing the continued displacement of individuals with developmental disabilities from various state-operated institutions under the jurisdiction of the OPWDD (S.3105)</p>

Short Title		Issues
Address the On-Going Mental Health/Addiction Crisis	<p>Governor Hochul has been a champion of addressing mental illness and has dedicated \$1 billion to support treatment.</p> <p>PEF supports the Governor's efforts to restore state-operated mental health beds.</p> <p>PEF believes state-operated facilities at OMH and OASAS require additional resources to ensure universal on-site diagnosis so every New Yorker who presents with issues at any OASAS or OMH facility can be diagnosed and begin treatment.</p>	<p><u>Universal On-Site Diagnosis and Treatment at State Facilities</u></p> <p><i>BUDGET REQUEST: \$10 Million</i></p> <p>The state needs to dedicate more resources to hire qualified, licensed staff at each OMH and OASAS facility to enable the immediate, on-site evaluation of all individuals who present for treatment in order to develop an immediate entry point for care and short-term stabilization or inpatient support, if needed. Developing this capacity will enable an expedited diagnosis of mental health, addiction or co-occurring disorders, and allow for coordination of care between public and private providers of services predicated on the needs of the client.</p> <p><u>Support Executive Budget Proposal:</u> 125 additional State-operated mental health beds in OMH facilities</p>

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Protect Retirees Living on Fixed Incomes	<p>New York's retired public employees have rendered a career of public service to the state and its citizens. The state has an obligation to protect its retired staff who live on fixed incomes and who are facing higher than anticipated costs.</p>	<p><u>Support Skilled Nursing Benefit for Medicare-Eligible Retirees</u> (S.4465/A.3896) This bill allows the state's insurance to continue as secondary insurance in order to provide the same level of treatment for skilled nursing care for state retirees and dependents who are now covered by Medicare.</p> <p><u>Oppose Executive Budget Proposal:</u> End Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA) program (S.8305/A.8805) – Part S</p>
Reject Privatization of Public Services	<p>New York uses the design build contracting program to allow single or multi-sourced contracts for the design, construction and/or inspection of taxpayer-funded projects outside of the traditional competitive bidding process and with little or no public oversight. This proposal expands this program to cover more federally funded projects and includes local governments.</p>	<p><u>Oppose Executive Budget Proposal:</u> Design Build Expansion (S.8308/A.8808) – Part U</p>