

# *THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS*

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**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

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## **Progressive Caucus Calls for Revenue Raising Options to Prevent Cuts to Essential City Services**

**NEW YORK, NY**, June 16, 2010 – The New York City Council Progressive Caucus today released the results of their survey measuring New Yorkers' opinions about the soon-to-be-finalized New York City budget. The survey tested nearly 2,000 New Yorkers, and an overwhelming 89% of them supported the implementation of fair-share revenue options in order to prevent cuts to vital services.

The survey asked respondents which budget cuts they were the most opposed to, and the top responses included: the proposal to close 16 child care centers, the elimination of funding for 500 food pantries citywide, the proposed closures and reductions in services to New York's public libraries, the shuttering of nearly one-quarter of the City's Senior Centers, the closure of 20 fire engine companies, the elimination of 248 HIV/AIDS case managers, and the proposed cuts to English classes and other support services to recent immigrants.

Standing on the steps of City Hall with numerous social service providers and agencies, the Progressive Caucus members urged the Mayor to consider revenue raising options as a part of the final city budget in order to prevent cuts to essential city services. The survey results indicated that New Yorkers would prefer to see the implementation revenue raising options, including closing a tax loophole that currently exists for hedge fund and private equity managers; removing insurance companies' exemption from the General Corporation Tax; making the New York City personal income tax more progressive; and eliminating tax breaks for vacant residential lots. The implementation of just one of these potential options would help stave off millions of dollars worth of cuts to vital services.

"New Yorkers have told us clearly that they overwhelmingly prefer a 'fair share' approach to the City's budget. If we would just treat the income of hedge fund and private equity managers like we treat everyone else – something both of our U.S. Senators support at the federal level – we could preserve thousands of child care and after-school slots and summer jobs, and keep our public pools and senior centers and libraries open," said Co-Chair of the Progressive Caucus Brad Lander.

"The only way to maintain a viable City now and into the future is by pursuing new revenue options in our budget," said Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito, Co-Chair of the Progressive Caucus. "Under the Executive Budget, low- and moderate-income families are being asked to make all the sacrifices, while Wall Street and the wealthiest New Yorkers are not being asked to put in their fair share. What we need now more than ever is leadership from our mayor to keep all options on the table during these difficult times."

“Is it really true that our only option is to make impossible choices between cuts to these essential services? Is it really true that lower and middle-income families, who rely on these services, need to bear all the pain of these budget cuts?” Council Member Chin said. “Mayor Bloomberg would have you believe it. But really, this is a false choice. We need to at least bring revenue generating solutions to the table in order to have an honest conversation as a city about our priorities. New Yorkers deserve at least that much.”

"We cannot afford to cut the core services that sustain our great city and it is vital to ensure that they receive their fair share of the city's revenue," said Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer. "We must remember that we are a Government of the people, by the people, for the people and not lose sight of those most vulnerable among us."

“We should be thinking broadly about how to solve the budget gap. Just as the Mayor is considering agency cuts as the solution, he should also be considering all innovative revenue generating options being brought to the table as well before a solution is made. Cutting social services like public education and child care as a means to save money will have an immediate negative impact on the working families in my district who cannot afford to lose these vital services," said NYC Council Member Jumaane D. Williams.

“The Governor, Assembly and State Senate must recognize that the proposed cuts are real, the layoffs are real for residents, and the absence of \$1.3 billion is real for all communities. It is obvious that the recession has not only taken a toll on residents, but also on the City and its budget. The budget cuts announced by the administration could have devastating consequences, so I encourage all New Yorkers to call their state representatives and demand they pass a fair, balanced budget as soon as possible,” said Councilmember Letitia James.

“The Progressive Caucus has determined that the people of the City are not satisfied with the planned starvation diet that the Administration has proposed for us. We cannot allow children, seniors and immigrants to bear the burden of service cuts when there are revenue possibilities that have been dismissed without due consideration,” said Councilmember Julissa Ferreras.