

New York's \$16 Billion Gift: "Eliminate the State Deficit and Prevent Tens of Thousands of Layoffs and Large Service Cutbacks"

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Low-moderate and middle-income New Yorkers already pay a higher percentage of family income in state and local taxes than do the richest one percent of New Yorkers!

Surprisingly, there is a simple way to eliminate the state deficit and prevent tens of thousands of layoffs and large service cutbacks.

What most New Yorkers do not know is that for about a century there has been a state stock transfer tax on purchases of securities. This year, this tax, similar to ones imposed in 30 other countries, will amount to about \$16 billion. Amazingly, since 1979, this tax has been instantly rebated by New York State back to the brokers or clearinghouses who paid it. A 100% rebate every year for the bailed out industry that caused the recession and its immense human damage.

Obviously the stock exchanges and their brokers wield big political power. Flush with arrogance, bailouts and profits, they have no shame. So after blocking a tax on those unconscionable bonuses that outraged so many Americans, the securities industry has made sure that neither the Democratic nor Republican candidates for Governor utter a peep about retaining this \$16 billion in tax revenues to get the state out of its dire straits.

One man, Howie Hawkins from Syracuse, NY, is challenging both the big boys on Wall Street and the duopolists' candidates. He is the Green Party candidate for Governor, nicknamed the Green Hornet. Pollinating truth and justice across the State, this ex-Marine, author, long-time citizen advocate, working blue collar teamster and public interest thinker, challenged Mr. Cuomo's self-imposed taboo:

"Why is Mr. Cuomo, the anointed front runner, hiding the Stock Transfer Tax from the public when it is an obvious way to bridge the state budget deficit? Why does he rule out higher taxes on the rich when they have more money than ever, why won't he make them pay their fair share, when they'll still be rich after paying their fair share?"

All the politicians in Albany act like we're out of money and debate over what services to cut, all the while refusing to tell New Yorkers about the \$16 billion they hand back to Wall Street speculators," he added.

Mr. Cuomo is a recipient of campaign contributions from hedge fund managers.

Take any poll. Betcha New Yorkers overwhelmingly support Mr. Hawkins' position (see: www.howiehawkins.com). Unfortunately, the two major parties predictably exclude him from any debates this fall.

If you are a New Yorker, and after reading this you are less indignant than you would be were you overcharged by a cab driver or were hurled a racist or ethnic slur from some passerby, it is unlikely you'll hustle up a neighborhood or workplace petition to demand that your lawmakers in Albany legislate keeping that \$16 billion and all the jobs that can be saved with that revenue.

My guess is that if a million New Yorkers sign such petitions in the next three weeks and talk it up where they live in city, town and countryside, they'll win. You'll also signal that you're ready to jettison your political servitude and assert the sovereignty of the people as expressed in our Constitution's preamble—"we the people."

If you can't wait, call your Albany legislators at 518-455-2800 (State Senate) or 518-455-4100 (State Assembly) to see when they will be near your town during this summer. Go and give them two earfuls and demand that they commit.

Ralph Nader is the author of Only the Super-Rich Can Save Us!, a novel.

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