

Governor Hochul's State of the State Silent on Older New Yorkers and Caregivers

Statement by Becky Preve, Executive Director of the Association on Aging in New York State

Contact: becky@agingny.org "Aside from the outstanding performance of the 'Timeless Torches,' once again the State of the State ignores the many needs and challenges faced by older New Yorkers. This is a repeating theme and speaks to the lack of commitment for older residents, and the issue of ageism in society. In fact, although New York State is home to 4.84 million older individuals, and has 4.1 million caregivers, the State of the State's massive briefing book almost entirely ignores the challenges older New Yorkers face, even after aging services experts spent two years working on a Master Plan for Aging, a Master Plan that was an Executive Order issued by Governor Hochul."

"Despite the fact that those age 50 and older represent 36 percent of the state's population, the New York State Office for the Aging's (NYSOFA) Budget represents a scant 8/10th's of 1 percent of the State Budget, and this lack of funding continues to impoverish and institutionalize older residents."

"According to NYSOFA's first ever statewide needs assessment survey, 75 percent of older New Yorkers consider themselves 'healthy/very healthy, active and engaged.' Many are still working and plan on continuing to work into their mid-70's. Thousands volunteer for not-for profits, and their economic and social contributions are well documented and unmistakable."

"While the State of the State is silent on older adults and their caregivers, we are hopeful that the State Budget will not be. We cannot continue to allow thousands of older New Yorkers and caregivers to languish on waiting lists for a hot home delivered meal, a shower, or transportation to chemotherapy while we highlight work being done on equity and affordability. The state of the state largely focused on families, yet did not acknowledge that older individuals are also members of families. We applaud universal child care, and free nutrition in public schools, but equity includes the same lens and funding for older residents needing respite and meals."

Here are the facts:

- Older New Yorkers contribute \$719 billion (43 percent) to the states GDP;
- Their spending supports almost 6 million jobs.
- They generate \$482 billion in wages and salary,
- \$72 billion (41 percent) of state and local taxes.
- More than 4.1 million New Yorkers provide uncompensated care to someone else, most of which are older adults caring for older adults, with an economic value if paid for at the market rate of \$39 billion.

"I raise all the amazing and impactful contributions of older adults, as it speaks to why we must support the older New Yorkers who do develop needs as they age. Older individuals have overwhelmingly provided the economic backbone of NYS, yet there is a continued refusal to fund services that may become necessary to support aging in place. Services through New York State Office for the Aging show amazing return on investment, save hundreds of millions of dollars to Medicaid, and more importantly, show respect and provide dignity to Older New Yorkers and families"

Becky Preve is the Executive Director of the Association on Aging in New York, a not-for-profit membership organization that supports the 59 Area Agencies on Aging. The mission of the Association is to support and enhance the capacity of New York's local providers to work in collaboration with the aging network to promote independence, preserve dignity, and advocate on behalf of aging New Yorkers and families. ➡



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