



**State of the State Address
Governor George E. Pataki
January 8, 2003**

Chief Judge Kaye, honorable members of the Court of Appeals, Lieutenant Governor Donohue, Attorney General Spitzer, Comptroller Hevesi, Majority Leader Bruno, Speaker Silver, Leader Nesbitt, Leader Patterson, respected members of the Legislature, distinguished guests...

It's a privilege to be with you again this year.

And to the new members of the legislature and the Court of Appeals -- congratulations -- and welcome to this historic chamber.

Before I begin, let us pause for a moment of silence, in memory of two colleagues we've lost this past year -- former Senate Majority Leader Ralph Marino and Assemblywoman Pauline Rhodd-Cummings.

It's an honor to address so many of you for the second time in just eight days.

At least, it's an honor for me....I'm not sure how you feel about it.

In fact, there were some complaints that in my inaugural address, I didn't speak long enough.

It was the first time in my eight years as Governor that anyone has ever complained about that.

But I fully intend to make up for it today, so get comfortable.

I want to thank my distinguished colleague and good friend, Gov. Hugh Carey for once again being here.

Governor, it's clear to all of us that the oath you took 28 years ago to serve our State was a lifetime oath.

On behalf of all New Yorkers, thank you.

I'm also pleased to welcome former Lt. Gov. Mary Anne Krupsak back to this chamber.

Mary Anne, your presence here today, along with that of your former boss, Governor Carey, is a shining example of the new spirit of unity I will speak of today.

And of course, I want to thank two great women who have given me everything that is important in my life -- my values, my happiness and my wonderful children. Mom, Libby, thank you for being here as you have been every year. We meet at a pivotal time in New York's history -- a time when you and I in this chamber -- and collectively, all New Yorkers -- have within our grasp the power to consciously determine whether we, as a people who have been tried and tested by great

adversity, have the will and courage to transcend that adversity in a way that demonstrates the strength of our collective character.

There is no question in my mind about the direction in which that collective character will lead us. If you believe that "every trial endured and weathered in the right spirit makes a soul nobler and stronger than it was before" there can be no doubt about New York's future.

This generation of New Yorkers has already given us every right to believe that ours is a future rich with hope and promise.

We have already demonstrated our strength, our character and our courage in defiance of those who would rob us of our freedom.

Now we must rally that same spirit against a crisis that threatens our prosperity.

And in doing so, we must be frank, honest and clear about the scope of the crisis we now face.

We live under the continued threat of terrorist attacks. At the same time, we are coping with the devastating economic fallout from a barbaric assault on New York City. And we are still recovering from a national recession that has cost our State jobs while decimating our State's finances.

Yet, despite the gravity of these challenges, our greatest asset is the spirit of unity that has guided us in the past. I said it last week, and I'll say it again: La union hace la fuerza – In unity there is strength.

Times are tough but our future is bright, because we made the right decisions during the past eight years – and most importantly – because New Yorkers are strong, united and share a common purpose.

We faced extreme adversity in the past, and we prevailed.

Now, we face challenges that threaten our future -- and we will meet those challenges with the same mettle and equal resolve.

And while we deal with the immediate crisis we must also look beyond today and focus our sights and our energies towards the bright future that awaits us tomorrow.

For we know that if we act responsibly, the crisis before us will be temporary, and if we build on the remarkable progress we've already made, the promise of the future we seek will be unlimited.

It will be a future that will see New York become a world leader in the high-tech economy in the 21st century, just as we were leaders in manufacturing in the 20th century.

Where all students with a degree in computer science, biology or physics, will be able to begin a high-tech career right within commuting distance of their hometown.

It will be a future where families move to New York to send their children to our first-class elementary and secondary schools, just as students from across the country and around the globe today come to New York to attend one of our world-class colleges or universities.

It will be a future where every single child has access to affordable, quality health care and one where our senior citizens think more about where they'll spend their vacations, than how they'll pay for their prescriptions.

It will be a future where taxes are lower than they are today, the economy is stronger and families are more prosperous.

It will be a future where every family feels safe not only in their homes and in their neighborhoods, but from the threat of terror.

It will be a future where people from around the globe seeking the promise of freedom in America will find a good job, affordable housing and a good education, right here in New York.

It will be a future where New York's air and water are even cleaner than at the turn of the century and where millions of

acres of open space and wildlife habitat are preserved forever.

And it will be a future where all New Yorkers, all Americans and people from across the globe come to visit, work and live in a reborn Lower Manhattan – in numbers greater than ever before.

Our future will be one of unlimited opportunity if we responsibly navigate the rough waters we face today.

The only way we can do it is together. Partisanship must once again be cast aside.

Differences of opinions will exist but they must be worked out in good faith.

Partisanship and parochial concerns will only undermine our efforts to overcome the challenges we face. Senator Bruno, Speaker Silver...and all my colleagues in the Legislature, I once again extend my hand in cooperation.

I know we can go forward in a non-partisan manner. I know we can because we have in the past. I know we can because we must.

The decisions we make will not always be easy –nor will the actions we take –but they will be necessary, and they will lead New York back to prosperity.

Yet, the value of prosperity is diminished unless New Yorkers feel safe. Protecting New Yorkers from harm must always be our top priority.

During the past eight years we've enacted some of the toughest crime-fighting policies in the nation. And today, neighborhoods across New York State are safer than they've been since 1975.

Since September 11, we've had to face the sobering reality that there are terrorists, both at home and abroad, who want to harm us and who plot against us.

It is a reality I address every day. The threat is real, but so is our resolve.

No state is doing more to protect its citizens than New York.

Within one month of the attacks we established the Office of Public Security to coordinate efforts with the federal Department of Homeland Security.

We unveiled the Counter-Terrorism Network, a secure communications system that provides local law enforcement with instantaneous terrorism-related alerts, advisories and background information.

Lt. Governor Donohue has been traveling the State educating local departments on its use. Mary, thank you for all you have done on this and so many other issues of importance to the people of New York State.

We've completed the nation's first vulnerability assessment of key infrastructure areas across the State.

Our Cyber-Security & Critical Infrastructure Coordination Initiative is working to protect individuals and businesses from Internet crime and terrorism.

Our Fraudulent Documents Task Force has resulted in the shutdown of criminal ID mills and the arrest of more than 600 suspects.

In the fight against bio-terror, we put in place the Health Alert Network to collect, analyze and share reportable disease data between the State and health care facilities.

We upgraded security at all of our airports, using the most advanced technology at JFK and La Guardia. And in late October, the Transportation Security Administration agreed to our request to require criminal background checks on employees working in "sterile areas" of airport terminals, the area between bag screening and the plane.

We have strengthened security at our borders by increasing the number of State Police who secure vulnerable points of entry.

And we'll continue to work with Washington to make sure that federal agencies such as the INS, Customs and the FBI are fulfilling their responsibility for border security.

We also have the protection of the finest National Guard force in the nation. I have activated our Guard more than 30 times since becoming Governor. Each time they have responded quickly, courageously and heroically.

The men and women of the National Guard have also been called by the President to fight overseas.

They've served in Afghanistan and as we speak, hundreds are deployed in such nations as Bosnia, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, and thousands more are ready to go.

They are today's minutemen and they are always there for us. As always General Maguire, and to all of the men and women of the National Guard, New York salutes you.

Despite all we've done, we know that a terrorist only has to strike once to wreak havoc.

A carefully thought out and vigilant security effort can reduce the danger and lower the likelihood of such attacks.

I urge this body to build on the progress we've already made by passing additional anti-terror measures developed in conjunction with Attorney General Spitzer.

We must abolish the statute of limitations for all terrorist crimes, and change the penalty for anyone caught in possession of chemical or biological weapons to life in prison without parole.

We must also give New York City and State law enforcement the same tools federal officers have in tracking and arresting terrorists. And we must do it without delay.

We must also continue to enhance our State's preparedness in the event of natural disasters or future terrorist attacks. A coordinated approach must rely on strong partnerships among all State agencies and the private sector.

Today, I'm pleased to announce the appointment of someone we all know well -- Jim Natoli -- as Director of Disaster Preparedness and Response. This new role is essential in ensuring that New York continues to be pro-active in preparation of our response and recovery procedures.

As we work to continue to shield New Yorkers against further terror, we must never forget the men and women who risk their lives in foreign lands fighting the enemies of freedom.

I mentioned the National Guard.

There are thousands of other New Yorkers who proudly serve in all branches of the military.

Their cause is just...their courage is great --and the people of New York stand with them and with President Bush in their heroic efforts to defend America.

In August of last year I received an e-mail from three Army Reserve soldiers from Rochester who were deployed in Afghanistan.

One of those men, Captain Steve McAlpin, is with us here today and he brought something back from his tour of duty that he and his troops wanted us to see.

The slab of marble Captain McAlpin holds comes from a bombed-out palace in Afghanistan. The palace was once used as living quarters by Osama bin Laden...not anymore.

This slab of marble will now go to our new State Military Museum in Saratoga and forever be a symbol of our resolve to destroy the forces of terror.

Captain McAlpin, New York thanks you for your service to our country, and please pass along our thanks and appreciation to the soldiers in your unit, and particularly Sergeants DelGado and Morales.

As we strengthen public security, it is imperative that we also take swift and aggressive steps to strengthen our economy.

The backbone of a strong family is a good job, and since 1995 we've worked hard to change the policies that discouraged economic growth and job creation.

By September 11, 2001, those policies had helped to create more than 700,000 net new jobs. In a single day, much of that progress was wiped out. The terrorist attacks directly led to the loss of almost 100,000 jobs. And the national economic downturn has further jeopardized our efforts to create new jobs.

That is why we must continue the policies that were the foundation for unprecedented growth prior to the attacks; a foundation built on the understanding that New York is the place where dreams come true, where ideas are nurtured, where vision is valued and opportunity is real.

Even in these difficult times, there is a confidence that New York will persevere and will stay on a path to job growth.

That is why the budget I propose will not delay the tax cuts we've already passed. It will, in fact, add new targeted tax incentives to attract additional investment and good, high-tech jobs.

Each of us, time and again, has talked to our constituents about creating jobs, about fighting for every job.

And over the past eight years, together, we have fought for every job and created hundreds of thousands of new ones.

Let's make sure that what we say at home is what we do in Albany. Let's not say we are going to fight to create jobs and then come to Albany and vote to raise job-killing taxes.

It's a choice between the two. We must choose jobs.

As other states adopt massive tax increases in response to their fiscal crises, we must look beyond the short term to the future we want for ourselves and our children.

It's not just about getting through this budget session or even the next. It's about believing in our pro-growth agenda and in the people of New York who make it work -- knowing that their perseverance will lead New York beyond this crisis to even greater economic strength and prosperity.

While other states raise taxes, let us out-compete any state and continue to create new jobs by maintaining New York's eight-year record as the tax-cutting capital of America.

In doing so we must pay special attention to the needs of the new high-tech economy.

Two years ago, I set forth a simple but powerful idea: Combine the power of our high-tech industry with the strengths of our top-flight academic institutions -- add active State government support -- and we can create a new economy and a new prosperity for New York.

This notion is embodied in our Centers of Excellence -- a network of high-tech research and economic development centers stretching from Buffalo to Brookhaven -- creating an Empire State High Tech Corridor that teams our universities with industry.

Already, this Corridor has attracted nearly \$1 billion in investment from industry, the federal government and the private sector, and it has gained national and international attention.

Fifteen years ago, a new consortium of computer chip manufacturers called SEMATECH announced it would create a state-of-the-art research and development facility.

New York State, along with a host of others, vied in an intense competition for that facility. New York lost that competition to Austin, Texas in 1988, and New York lost big.

Since that time, Austin's population doubled, and the high-tech economy grew to more than 100,000 employees.

When we heard of SEMATECH's plans to launch a second research initiative we knew we had made New York a different place -- a better place for growth and for investment. And we knew this was our second chance.

So last year we quietly, but aggressively, went out to convince SEMATECH that New York was the place for it – and this time New York won.

This past summer, I announced that International SEMATECH would establish a \$400 million Research and Development initiative, right here in Albany. The work at this center will produce the next generation of computer chips, and will make New York a leader of the high-tech frontier.

Due to our success with SEMATECH, we are the envy of many states and nations, and after that important announcement, many wondered what we would do for an encore. They are not wondering now.

Just this November, we announced that Tokyo Electron Limited, one of the world's largest makers of semiconductor tools, will establish a \$300 million R & D center at the Albany Center of Excellence, its first center outside Japan.

Together, we have created a powerful nanoelectronics cluster upstate that will bring new investment and new high-tech jobs to New York.

Companies across the State will benefit – equipment and material suppliers like Solid State Cooling near Rhinebeck, Praxair in Tonawanda, Ferro Electronics Materials in Penn Yan, Veeco Instruments in Plainview and Air Innovations in Syracuse – just to name a few.

We are building state-of-the-art facilities across the State with the best in equipment and research capability.

In Buffalo, we have broken ground on the new bioinformatics facility. In Greater Rochester, they are moving forward with labs in a new photonics facility. In Syracuse, site selection has begun for an environmental science facility.

In Albany, steel is up and more is on its way for the Center of Excellence in Nanoelectronics, and on Long Island site selection and planning is nearly complete for the new construction of the facility for their Center of Information Technology.

Along with the facilities, we need to have top talent -- the intellectual capital required to move our efforts forward. And we have that talent right here in New York.

Dr. Jeffrey Skolnick is the new director of the Buffalo Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics. Jeffrey is the MVP in bioinformatics. He began his own successful bio-tech company in California and has brought his extraordinary talent to New York. I know Jeffrey will revitalize the Life Sciences in Buffalo, just like Drew Bledsoe has re-energized the Bills.

And we also have others leading our efforts.

Yacov Shamash -- a leader in creating Long Island's new economy -- from the Long Island Center of Excellence in Information Technology.

Jianshum Zhang -- an international leader in the study of indoor environmental quality -- from the Syracuse Center of Excellence in Environmental Systems.

Don Keck -- the father of fiber optic cable -- and Alexis Clare -- an internationally known glass scientist and researcher -- from the Greater Rochester Center of Excellence in Photonics.

And Alain Kaloyeros who helped us bring SEMATECH and Tokyo Electron to New York State -- from the Albany Center of Excellence in Nanoelectronics.

These New Yorkers are making our State the high-tech capital of the world. Please join me in welcoming these important members of our all-star, high-tech team -- the best and brightest minds you'll find.

And it's not just new people we are attracting with our investments in the future. It's industry giants – like IBM and Tokyo Electron – and now, another you might have heard of – Advanced Micro Devices out of California. AMD is one of the world's leading chip manufacturers, a Fortune 500 company with sites in the U.S., Europe, Japan and Asia.

Today I am proud to announce that AMD, in partnership with IBM, will launch an advanced chip development venture in the Hudson Valley – making an investment of hundreds of millions of dollars and creating good, high-tech jobs. AMD is coming to New York because we are making New York State the home of high technology.

But we need to continue our momentum by expanding our Empire State High Tech Corridor.

Therefore, we are moving forward with additional Centers of Excellence -- in Westchester with leading research institutions like New York Presbyterian Hospital, Cornell and Columbia universities, New York Medical College, and companies like IBM and GE, focused on biotech...

...And in New York City, with Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, Columbia, NYU and other medical research institutions, to build on the biotech industry and academic strengths there.

We must build on the other high-tech and biotech investments we have made -- in our STAR Centers, our Advanced Research Centers and our Centers for Advanced Technology -- in places like Alfred, Binghamton, Potsdam and Ithaca, and throughout our Empire State High Tech Corridor.

Industry and university collaboration are essential to our goal of creating a new economy in New York, and thanks to the efforts of you, my friends...my colleagues in the Legislature, we have made tremendous progress.

This is a critical time in our State's history. All these new projects and initiatives hold promise and they are loaded with incredible potential. They need to be nurtured with the same energy that was used to conceive and attract them.

There is a reason why SEMATECH chose New York, why AMD is coming here. There is a reason why Deutsche Bank located its North American headquarters in Lower Manhattan and why IBM chose to make the largest investment in America in eight years right in the Hudson Valley.

It's because they have a new confidence in New York that didn't exist eight years ago, or 15 years ago. Yes, it's good policies and smart programs, but above all it's a renewed confidence in the State. Confidence in where we are, where we are headed and where we will be in 20 years.

They have confidence in a New York that, despite our temporary fiscal crisis, is inherently stronger than it's ever been, but not as strong and not as good as it's going to be.

We have every reason to have confidence in our future, knowing that we can again turn crisis into comeback if we heed the lessons we have learned over the last eight years.

We face a fiscal crisis today of a magnitude that we have not faced in our lifetime. How we meet this challenge will be crucial in shaping the legacy we leave our children and grandchildren. It will require tough decisions, but we have made them before and they have worked.

During the past eight years we brought fiscal prudence and responsibility back to State government. We cut taxes more than any state in the nation to help create jobs. We held the line on spending. Only two states have been as restrained in controlling general fund spending as New York.

We set aside record amounts and bolstered our rainy day funds by billions of dollars. As a result, we built our reserves to the highest level in State history.

We reduced the size of the State workforce and made our government more efficient. And we enacted historic debt reform measures and created the first fund in State history to pay down existing debt.

As a result of our efforts, New York's finances were in the best condition in decades and we received four credit rating upgrades - giving the State our best credit rating in 24 years.

That is our record, and we can be proud of it. Now, this crisis requires that we do it again. Our record provides us with a road map to renewal.

The budget plan I will put forward in three weeks will spend less money than we did last year. With the exception of public security, no segment of the budget will be exempt.

While this year we reduced the State workforce, reduced agency spending, and reduced our debt costs, we still face a potential \$2 billion deficit in the current fiscal year. And we know the deficit will be several times larger next year.

Unlike the deficits of the past that resulted from poor policies, today's crisis is a result of the horrible attacks of September

11th, exacerbated by the national recession and the unique difficulties of the financial industry so critical to New York's economy.

And this fallout has turned out to be much more severe and drawn out than virtually every economist had predicted just six months ago. But then, the economists had nothing to compare with the devastation of September 11th.

As a result, we simply must spend less money. It is what we did in 1995 and in 1996. There were dire predictions then, but our finances soon improved, and our economy boomed.

While seeking to avoid layoffs, we will work with our public employee unions to further reduce the size of the State workforce and make government the most efficient it can be.

We'll look to privatize certain State assets, take advantage of low-interest rates by refinancing State bonds to reduce debt service costs, and continue our reform efforts to lower the cost of Medicaid and other government programs.

We will look to utilize other available funds, such as tobacco settlement funds and other resources, to help close the shortfall the State will be facing. The use of these funds will allow us to make the necessary spending reductions in a reasoned and responsible fashion.

As we take decisive actions, we must always remember to look for solutions that go beyond this year's budget problems, keeping a clear focus on decisions that will shape our common destiny for years to come.

We only need to look at our own record to know that tough decisions today will lift our State to a stronger, more prosperous tomorrow.

In 1989, New York and the nation faced a recession. New York's government chose massive tax increases in response to the problem. It was the wrong choice. The recession ended in the rest of the country in a short eight months, but in New York it lasted for more than three years, and it cost our state more than 500,000 jobs.

In 1995, when New York's economy and finances were still in a state of crisis, we made the right choice. We cut taxes, reduced spending, and led New York's economy to renewal.

The result was the creation of hundreds of thousands of new jobs. And that growth allowed us to make record investments in education, health care and the environment.

We know what works and we know what doesn't. Let us work together in the coming months to address these fiscal challenges, relying on the proven fiscal policies and practices that we have put in place together during the past eight years.

And as we look to a future of a safe, fiscally sound and economically vibrant New York, we must always look to improve the education of our children.

Together, we've had many successes in improving and reforming education. We achieved historic New York City school governance reform. We enacted landmark school safety legislation -- a national model. We created quality after-school programs, providing extra learning opportunities and a safe haven from the streets.

We created innovative teacher recruitment programs like Teachers of Tomorrow that, by the end of its third year, will have recruited, retained and trained over 30,000 teachers. We have more certified teachers today than at anytime in our State's history.

We brought about some of the highest learning standards in the nation, and we have provided record resources to implement those standards.

We have made progress, but we need to do more. Last session, we made historic reforms to the New York City school system, putting control and accountability for the City schools where they belong -- with the Mayor.

These reforms were a long time coming and I thank Senator Bruno, Speaker Silver and my colleagues in the Legislature for your efforts on behalf of the children of New York City.

Mayor Bloomberg, you're already implementing sweeping reforms. Your leadership is breaking the mold on education.

Congratulations.

That law provided more accountability in New York City. This year we should also give the Mayors of our other urban centers in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Albany more input and a greater voice in their school systems.

And as we make the largest school systems more accountable, we must demand the same accountability from the state's education bureaucracy. This year, I will advance sweeping reforms to governance of our schools statewide, by reforming the way our State Board of Regents is chosen. We must make our statewide education system more accountable to parents and their children.

And as we make reforms, let us also refocus the mission of the State Education Department on its primary goal -- educating our students so they can meet our standards and compete in the 21st century economy.

Acupuncture and massage therapy have proven physiological benefits. But let's let the Department of State deal with the testing and licensing of these and nearly 40 other unrelated professions -- not the Department of Education. Let's let them concentrate on the education of our children.

And while we have made good progress by addressing the teacher shortage, today we must continue to look toward the future. Today, I urge the creation of the finest urban centers in the nation to train the next generation of teachers, to transform the Richardson complex in Buffalo into the premier urban training center for teachers in the 21st Century in partnership with Buffalo State College and the people of Western New York.

And with Mayor Bloomberg and CUNY, we will work to achieve a similar transformation of Governors Island, to make these historic facilities beacons of educational excellence. Let's turn these crumbling vestiges of the past into a shining example of hope, opportunity and leadership for the future.

And as we march toward that future let's empower New Yorkers with an even greater voice in our democracy. Currently, voters in nearly half the states have initiative and referendum. Let's empower the voters of New York State with that fundamental right, and let's start this year.

In the coming months, I will once again put forth a comprehensive campaign finance reform bill to change a process that has gotten out of hand and needs to be reformed. We all agree that it needs to happen. Let's get it done.

Let's reaffirm our commitment to New York's seniors by protecting the STAR program so they can keep their homes and remain in the communities they helped to build.

And we must continue to pass smart criminal justice reforms. Let's start by expanding the DNA database to include all convicted criminals. We already abolished parole for all violent criminals and witnessed crime rates plunge, let's abolish parole for all convicted felons. Let's help women and children by further improving our domestic violence laws by ensuring any history of violence is taken into account when determining bail for accused abusers, by lengthening orders of protection and by extending the domestic violence laws to protect unmarried couples living together.

And once and for all let's reconcile our differences and reform the failed Rockefeller Drug Laws. Let's begin the process of court reform as Chief Judge Kaye has proposed.

Let's continue New York's national leadership in health care by strengthening and renewing HCRA.

Let's continue to reclaim our waterfronts and provide new recreational opportunities for the families of New York. And to that end, today I am pleased to announce the addition of our newest State park -- we are going to transform Gallagher Beach into a great new recreational facility for the families of Buffalo and western New York.

Let's reform and refinance the Superfund and let's work to reduce greenhouse gases by adopting the carbon dioxide emission standards for motor vehicles which were recently proposed by the State of California.

We can also make New York a national leader in renewable energy usage. I am directing the Public Service Commission to implement a Renewable Portfolio Standard -- a program which will guarantee that within the next 10 years at least 25 percent of the electricity bought in New York will come from renewable energy resources like solar power, wind power, or fuel cells.

And let's show the world how strongly New York City is coming back. New York City has already beaten San Francisco to become America's finalist for the 2012 Summer Olympics. Let's continue our partnership with Mayor Bloomberg to

help New York City take the next step and show the international community that there is no better place for the Summer Games than the City of New York.

And at the same time, let's work together to bring the Winter Games once again to Lake Placid and to the North Country. Today, I'm proud to announce that we are working with Premier Landry of Quebec to put together America's first ever bi-national Olympic bid – a bid to have the games hosted jointly by the North Country and Quebec.

And who better to lead New York's efforts than someone who led Lake Placid's effort in 1980 -- with great success... someone who knows this room well. I am honored to welcome back, and announce as head of our Winter Olympic effort - Senator Ron Stafford.

And as the Olympics will bring international attention and national pride to New York, nothing will compare with our efforts to revitalize Lower Manhattan.

The last year in Lower Manhattan was a painful time. We mourned our loved ones at so many funerals. We stood shoulder to shoulder to move tons of earth and steel and we laid the foundation for a new day in Lower Manhattan, a future so bright it would eclipse even our darkest hour.

If 2002 was the year of recovery, 2003 will be the year of renewal. We will begin by keeping a promise to remember those we lost.

Today, a committee of dedicated volunteers – including many family members of September 11th heroes – released a mission statement that will serve as the guiding principles for design of an appropriate memorial.

These principles recognize that as September 11 united our nation in tragedy, the memorial must properly honor each individual killed on September 11th in New York, as well as in our nation's capital, and in Pennsylvania.

Despite the tremendous efforts of thousands of rescue workers, and the dedication of medical professionals, the remains of many of our loved ones are still unidentified. The guiding principles rightly call for an area of the memorial as a dignified, final resting place for all those who are known only to God.

And the proposal would preserve the footprints of the towers forever. This will ensure that even as our City heals, the memory of what happened on September 11 will never fade from our hearts.

But make no mistake, New York City will heal. We will move forward in the weeks ahead with the City and all our partners to develop a single plan for the site and its surroundings.

This plan will be refined over time but it will enable an international memorial competition to proceed this spring, allow for a 21st century transportation network, and set Lower Manhattan on the path to fully reclaim its place as the financial capital of the world.

Like so many others, September 11 will always fill me with deep emotions, from profound sadness at the loss of so many innocent people to great pride in the countless heroes, in and out of uniform. For me, the restoration of Lower Manhattan is not just an obligation, it's a duty of the highest order. We owe it to the families -- to our city, state and nation -- to do it right. And I know we will.

You and I were elected to lead -- and to strive at all times -- to make the right decisions, decisions that are best for New York, and best for New Yorkers.

In the weeks and months to come, it would be easy for any of us in this chamber today to sidestep that solemn responsibility and choose the path of personal political expediency.

It would be easy to do that. Easy but wrong -- wrong for New York, wrong for New Yorkers, wrong for the young people who will inherit any crisis we fail to confront, and wrong for the people who need our help most. We all agree that New York faces a serious crisis. We can either face it now and make the right choices to end it quickly, or we can pretend that it doesn't exist, thus guaranteeing that it will still be plaguing our state for years to come.

Ultimately, someone will have to make the tough choices that will transform today's fiscal crisis back into even greater economic prosperity than we enjoyed before September 11th.

As President Reagan said: "If not us, who? If not now, when?"

It must be this year, and it must be us.

As a father of four, I have no intention to bequeath hardship on my sons and daughters –or anyone else's.

And as Governor of the state which showed the world that cowardly terrorism is no match for character, courage, unity –I know we won't have to.

I'm optimistic about the challenges we face and the future that awaits us because I've seen what a united New York is capable of. Over the past 16 months, you and I have put partisan politics where it belongs – away, and hopefully forever.

As we move forward, I hope we all remember that our worst hour was also our finest.

Our shared history has given us the strength to shoulder the burdens that destiny has placed upon us, and the courage to confront them as one state, as one people, with one purpose and one future.

Let the experience of that shared history unite us in a way that not only strengthens us today, but enlightens us tomorrow, and binds us forever.

May God give us the strength and wisdom to do this.

God bless you all.

God bless New York.

God bless the United States of America.

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