

Citizens Budget Commission • Reinvent Albany • Citizens Union
Common Cause New York

January 15, 2025

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of the State of New York
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Good government groups urge you to omit extraordinary budget powers from the Fiscal Year 2026 Executive Budget

Dear Governor Hochul:

We write to urge you to omit from your budget proposal certain provisions and proposals that grant extraordinary budget authorities to the Executive and undermine the Comptroller's authorities.

In recent years, good government groups have [repeatedly encouraged Legislative leaders to reject these extraordinary power proposals](#) that have been in Executive Budgets. This year, in advance of the Executive Budget, we write to recommend the budget not propose to:

- Remove competitive bidding requirements and the Comptroller's oversight via provisions added to individual appropriations;
- Limit the scope of Comptroller review of certain bond transactions, as proposed for the first time in last year's Executive Budget;
- Allow universal appropriation transfer and interchange authority within the State Operations bill;
- Authorize up to \$4 billion in short-term revenue anticipation notes;
- Authorize transfer of \$1 billion from the General Fund to the "Health Care Transformation Account," absent more clearly defined uses in appropriations; and
- Increase the "Special Emergency Appropriation" from \$1 billion to \$2 billion.

Some of these provisions were first enacted in the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. At that time, the broad spending, budget management, and borrowing authorities were warranted to give the Executive branch the needed authority and flexibility to manage an historic public health emergency and potentially dire fiscal situation.

The situation now is vastly different. These extraordinary powers are no longer necessary and the Legislature has largely rejected them during budget negotiations. They should not be proposed in the first instance.

Furthermore, proposals to constrain the oversight authority of the State Comptroller open the door to wasteful spending and impropriety. The Comptroller's Office completes prompt review of contracts submitted by State agencies and authorities and sound analysis of bond offerings.

We strongly urge you to omit these extraordinary budget powers from the Fiscal Year 2026 Executive Budget.

Sincerely,

Andrew S. Rein
President
Citizens Budget Commission

Betsy Gotbaum
Executive Director
Citizens Union

John Kaehny
Executive Director
Reinvent Albany

Susan Lerner
Executive Director
Common Cause New York

cc:

Blake Washington, Director of the New York State Division of the Budget
Senator Liz Krueger, Chair of the Senate Finance Committee
Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow, Chair of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee