

Citizens Budget Commission • Citizens Union
• Common Cause New York • Empire Center for Public Policy
New York Public Interest Research Group • Reinvent Albany

March 02, 2026

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Temporary President and Majority Leader
New York State Senate
Legislative Office Building
188 State Street, Room 907
Albany, NY 12247

The Honorable Carl Heastie
Speaker
New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building
188 State Street, Room 932
Albany, NY 12248

Re: Good government groups urge you to omit extraordinary budget powers from the Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget

Dear Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Heastie:

We urge you to reject or modify several Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget provisions that would grant the Executive unnecessarily broad control over appropriations and borrowing authority outside of the normal budget process and would eliminate important State Comptroller oversight of certain appropriations and State contracts.

The budget again proposes to grant the Executive extraordinary powers that were initially temporarily enacted to provide fiscal flexibility during the pandemic. The circumstances that justified these powers are long past, so continuing this executive authority is not necessary. We urge the Legislature to:

- Reject universal appropriation transfer and interchange authority included in the State Operations bill, as in prior years;
- Reject language that exempts individual appropriations from competitive bidding requirements and Comptroller pre-audit oversight;
- Reject the \$1 billion transfer from the General Fund to the “Health Care Transformation Account,” unless its uses are defined in appropriations;
- Reduce the “Special Emergency Appropriation” from \$2 billion to \$1 billion, its level prior to the pandemic; and
- Reject the permanent executive authority to issue revenue anticipation notes totaling \$3 billion annually, as in prior years.

The Executive Budget also proposes to weaken the Office of the State Comptroller's oversight authority of State contracts and purchases. Specifically, Part Y of the Public Protection and General Government Article VII bill would increase the threshold for Comptroller review of State contracts from \$50,000 to \$300,000 and eliminate Comptroller pre-approval of centralized contracts purchase orders that exceed \$200,000. This proposal undercuts Comptroller oversight. While intended to speed up State procurement, the Comptroller's Office has historically reviewed contracts in a timely manner and identified wasteful spending in the process. That input is valuable and should be protected—by rejecting this proposal.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrew S. Rein
President
Citizens Budget Commission

Grace Rauh
Executive Director
Citizens Union

Susan Lerner
Executive Director
Common Cause New York

Zilvinas Silenas
President
Empire Center for Public Policy

Blair Horner
Senior Policy Advisor
New York Public Interest Research Group

John Kaehny
Executive Director
Reinvent Albany

cc:

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