

City of Miami Beach

City Manager

Summary of Articles

Anthony Figliola

(Note: Articles Follow In Reverse Chronicle Order)

Articles

- *Jerry Kremer and Anthony Figliola of Empire Government Strategies Present “Pandemic and Politics: What to Expect in 2021” at LIMBA, The Public Relations and Marketing Group, 2021.*
- *A GOP Brain Drain, The Post-Journal, January 4, 2020.*
- *Don’t be Cajoled into a Constitutional Convention, Long Island Press, April 14, 2017.*
- *How the Cost of a Convention Became Urban Legend, Politico, February 9, 2017.*
- *Another Voice: Constitutional Convention is Nothing but a Con, Buffalo News, January 20, 2017.*
- *Merits of Constitutional Convention Debated, Press-Republican, October 3, 2016.*
- *Keep the Bills in Buffalo by Tying Stadium Deal to Economic Development, Buffalo News, July 6, 2014.*
- *Legacy Cost Shadows Lurk Over N.Y. City, The Bond Buyer, May 17, 2013.*
- *Public Policy Expert Anthony Figliola, Announces Economic Development Ideas to Create Jobs in America, PRWEB, December 14, 2011.*
- *Analysis of Budget, Labor Press, April 5, 2011.*
- *Empire Government Strategies Celebrates Major Legislative Victories of 2010, Benzinga, January 3, 2011.*
- *Bungling New York State Bureaucrats Fumble \$200+ Million in Lost Revenues from Failed Tax Amnesty Program, PR Newswire, December 15, 2010.*
- *Former N.Y. State Assemblyman Arthur “Jerry” Kremer Starts New Lobbying Firm, Long Island Business News, February 26, 2009.*

Documents

- *New York State Ballot Question, Constitutional Convention, 2017.*

Webpages

- NY Con Con - <https://www.nyconcon.com/about/anthony-m-figliola/>
- Anthony Figliola, Empire Government Strategies Vice President - Prominent New Yorkers - <https://prominentnewyorkers.wordpress.com/anthony-figliola-attorney/>
- Empire Government Strategies - <https://empiregs.com/anthony-figliola>
- LinkedIn - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/anthony-figliola/>

Videos

- Jerry Kremer and Anthony Figliola – *YouTube* – January 22, 2021
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVOa_1oeMYA
- NBC Nightly News with Chuck Scarborough Interviews Anthony Figliola – *YouTube* – September 6, 2011 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-Hk5N4V1c8>
- 'A Bloody Mess' – *The Bond Buyer* - <https://www.bondbuyer.com/video/a-bloody-mess>
October 29, 2014

JERRY KREMER AND ANTHONY FIGLIOLA OF EMPIRE GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES PRESENT “PANDEMIC AND POLITICS: WHAT TO EXPECT IN 2021” AT LIMBA

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING GROUP

The Public Relations and Marketing Group
2021

LIMBA (Long Island Metro Business Action) has announced that Jerry Kremer and Anthony Figliola will be the guest speakers at the group’s upcoming virtual meeting on Friday, January 22, 2021. The topic will be “Pandemic and Politics: What to Expect in 2021.”

Legalization of marijuana, higher taxes, city against suburban legislators and progressives against moderates — all of these issues will dominate the 2021 Albany session. Who could better explain the battles to come than Mr. Kremer, who served as State Assembly Ways and Means Chair, and Mr. Figliola, Executive Vice President of Empire Government Strategies?

“The coming session will be unlike any other in recent years with battles on new taxes, budget cuts, and other dramatic reforms,” Mr. Kremer stated. Mr. Kremer is head of Empire Government Strategies, one of the state’s fastest-growing lobbying firms, and Chair of the Municipal and Regulatory Department at Ruskin Moscou Faltischek, a law firm based in Uniondale.

Mr. Kremer served in Albany for 23 years and is the only legislator from Long Island to ever head the prestigious Ways and Means Committee. He appears frequently on News 12 and ABC News. He writes weekly columns for three Long Island newspaper chains and is the author of *Winning Albany*, *Untold Stories About the Famous and Not So Famous*. He is the author of Albany’s automobile Lemon Law and a number of other prominent pieces of legislation.

Mr. Figliola has more than two decades of experience in government affairs, communications and economic development. He is considered one of the foremost experts on the federal CARES Act and has helped countless numbers of clients wade through bureaucratic red tape in many areas of government. As a public official, he helped secure over \$820 million in capital incentives for Long Island businesses and local governments.

From 2006 to 2008, he served as Deputy Supervisor of the Town of Brookhaven. He was responsible for overseeing more than 2,000 employees and a \$200 million budget. He managed a portfolio of expanding business, generating more than \$1 billion in capital investments and expansion and workforce development programs. His efforts were responsible for creating or protecting over 10,000 jobs.

The meeting begins at 9 a.m. Please visit the LIMBA website to register for the event. Registration is free, but spots for this discussion will be limited.

Sponsorship opportunities are available. For more information, or for a list of upcoming events, call (631) 757-1698 or visit www.limba.net.

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About LIMBA

Since 1

968, LIMBA (Long Island Metro Business Action) has been Long Island's catalyst for economic investment and improvement, sponsoring lively breakfast forums featuring Long Island business activists and government officials. Its mission is to promote and address issues that affect the quality of life on Long Island. For more information, call (631) 757-1698 or visit www.limba.net.

A GOP BRAIN DRAIN

THE POST-JOURNAL

Anthony M. Figliola
January 4, 2020

The State Senate GOP is suffering from a serious brain drain. The recent announcements that State Senators Joe Robach and Richard Funke will join half a dozen other republicans in retirement are a challenge to the powers of the upstate delegation.

However, new faces that reflect the makeup of the region can fill that gap, providing a balance to a New York City centric legislative agenda.

Anyone who has made the trip to Albany and participated in the legislative process can attest to the fact that experience counts. The legislature introduces some 13,000 bills each session. While many are what the old timers refer to as "*old chestnuts*" (a bill that gets recycled year after year), crucial issues do come up and upstate needs committed replacements to protect their interests.

As of now, the Republicans have 23 seats in the State Senate, most from upstate. Of that number, seven senators with over 100 years of state legislative experience have announced that they are moving on. While one seat has already been filled, two more Senators are running for former Congressman Chris Collins' seat. The rumor mill says one or two additional senators may call it quits before the 2020 election goes into full swing.

The question GOP stalwarts may be thinking is who will run and win back these seats? The bigger question should be – how do we replace people who have so much understanding of the legislative process and built a career on crossing party lines to get things done for their constituents?

It's no surprise that the new Democratic majority in the Senate is younger and still feeling their way around – as evidenced by rushing through laws (e.g., no cash bail) that now need to be amended. Campaigning is easy, but governing requires knowledge, strategy and the ability to work in a bi-partisan way.

There are big issues facing the state in 2020. As reported by this paper, we have a projected \$6.1 billion budget deficit. This is largely based on out of control Medicaid spending led by the state forking over billions to healthcare providers to cover their increased payroll due to the new state minimum wage law. Upstate is losing population as the job growth rate is at a third the national rate and half of the region's economy is contracting even as the administration injected tens of billions in taxpayer subsidies.

New Republican candidates must be BOLD in their ideas to lift up our state in a time of great uncertainty. They MUST come with a hunger to learn and had better do their homework.

Upstate New York has taken more than its fair share of setbacks. From the ban on fracking to minimum wages laws, the region has suffered mightily. Hopefully the replacements selected to run in November 2020 will be equal to the challenge.

But the first step is to run.

Anthony M. Figliola is vice president of Empire Government Strategies, an economic development and public affairs business in New York state. He is the co-author of *Patronage, Waste, and Favoritism – A Dark History of Constitutional Conventions* as well as the recent reports: *Congestion Pricing – Deal or No Deal* and *NY Tax Amnesty – Past Successes, Failures and Opportunities*.

DON'T BE CAJOLED INTO A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

LONG ISLAND PRESS

Anthony Figliola
April 14, 2017

On Nov. 7, the voters will make an important choice on whether to hold another state constitutional convention, which if approved would take place in April 2019. Voters beware, many of the groups advocating in favor of this ballot proposition are representing narrow interests, masked under the thin veil of good government.

Our state's constitution requires that every 20 years, voters get the opportunity to choose whether or not to hold a constitutional convention. During the past 112 years we have held four conventions (e.g., 1894, 1915, 1938 and 1967) and their accomplishments are debatable. However, there is one indisputable fact that ties them together, they were carbon copies of a typical legislative session, driven by politics and tilted to benefit the political elite.

Unlike in years past, there is no pressing public issue that is creating a wave of support for a convention. In fact, the most recent Siena College poll shows that more than 71 percent of New Yorkers have no idea there is even an upcoming vote.

Leading up to the Convention of 1894, the country was mourning the loss of President James Garfield, who was killed by an angry campaign worker who did not receive a government job. New Yorkers felt there was work to be done especially in passing civil service laws to end patronage and nepotism. In 1938, New York was recovering from a world war and the Great Depression, and many felt it was crucial to rebuild the national infrastructure and strengthen our laws.

Advocates for a convention will tell you that the only way to pass ethics reform is to have a convention, because the legislature can't get it done. Not true, this year the legislature proposed an amendment that would take away the pensions of legislators convicted of a felony. Many of these same proponents believe we need radical changes to our constitution, pushing to abolish the State Senate on the grounds that the Republicans who control the Senate with a group of independent Democrats are an impediment to getting progressive laws passed. Again, an empty argument. This month the legislature enacted, without a costly convention, an important progressive judicial reform that will raise the age of adult criminal prosecution [from 16 to 18 years of age](#).

There is another group who wants to abolish the state, in a plan that is a better fit for a mini-series on AMC. A disparate group of land owners, who want to keep their tax dollars, seek to abolish the government and form regional frontiers with a figurehead, played by Pierce Brosnan, in the role of Governor for the regions.

All of these groups fail to recognize that past conventions have been riddled with rigged agendas and political patronage. In fact, in 1938 lobbyists were allowed stand on the convention floor and debate proposed amendments. Anyone who tells you that this will be a people's convention is delusional. In 1967, 80 percent of the delegates were politically connected and 45 percent were current or former public officials who were able to collect a second salary, allowing them to double dip to boost their state pensions.

Constitutional conventions, which run concurrently with a regular legislative session, are not cost-effective. Not only are the delegates well paid, they get to hire staff. There are 204 delegate spots and they all need help. Administrative, legal, and research are just some of the staffing positions that have been filled in past conventions. Then you add per diems, food, transportation, lodging, and printed materials to the bottom line. You can even hire a special consultant or two.

The only stimulus for the economy is that the lobbyists can charge their clients another fee to represent them at the convention.

Thankfully, there is an alternative to this government boondoggle. During the last century, New Yorkers have amended their constitution 200 times by public referendum. Voters have shown time and time again that they can make intelligent choices and as such there is no reason to have a convention. The voters have elected 218 state officials, including the Governor, to represent their interests. The current democratic process allows the people to engage their government at the ballot box.

If the pro-convention advocates really want to change our laws, they can take a drive up to Albany like the rest of us and spend some time advocating for real reforms.

Anthony Figliola is Vice President of Empire Government Strategies and co-author of [Patronage, Waste and Favoritism – A Dark History of Constitutional Conventions.](#)

HOW THE COST OF A CONVENTION BECAME URBAN LEGEND

POLITICO

Bill Mahoney
February 9, 2017

ALBANY — When he announced his opposition to holding a state constitutional convention, an issue voters will decide on in November, Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan cited the potential for high costs.

"In 1967, the constitutional convention cost \$47 million," [he said](#) on Wednesday. "The estimate today, if you move it forward, it would be close to \$350 million, with no guaranteed results."

He was not the first to use those startling sums. Other opponents of a constitutional convention, an issue that is put to New York voters every 20 years, have been citing those figures as well.

Convention supporters say the estimates are way off base.

"The \$47 million number is bogus and the \$350 million number ridiculous," said Evan Davis, a former president of the New York City Bar Association and the manager of [a group](#) trying to persuade voters to support calling a convention.

Documentary evidence from around the time of the last convention backs up Davis: A 1973 book from the League of Women Voters noted that \$800,000 was spent on a preparatory commission and \$10 million was allocated for the convention itself. Henrik Dullea, a SUNY trustee who wrote a book about the 1967 convention, thinks there were some additional costs, but doubts expenses topped \$15 million.

So where did the \$47 million figure for the '67 convention come from?

It certainly has been used before. Articles and op-eds in the [Times Union](#), [Newsday](#) and the [Buffalo News](#) all cited it. In each case, the source or author was either former assemblyman Jerry Kremer or Anthony Figliola, who works with Kremer at the lobby firm Empire Government Strategies. Kremer was [one of the first](#) people to come out in opposition to a convention.

Figliola said the number was obtained by citing a figure for the cost of the '67 convention given by SUNY New Paltz's Gerald Benjamin — \$47 million — and then adjusting it for inflation to get the \$350 million figure for a convention now

Benjamin, the presumed source, was mystified .

"That number is absurd," Benjamin said. "I'm relying on Hank Dullea. I don't remember saying \$350 million, that's for sure."

And indeed, a review of a 2015 event hosted at the New York State Bar Association's office at which Figliola says Benjamin used this number shows he said something similar yet significantly different: "I simply put an inflator on the cost of the '67 convention and came up with \$47 million," [Benjamin said](#).

So his number was already adjusted upwards from the costs of the 1967 convention. The \$350 million figure was created by inflating the costs from 50 years ago twice.

Figliola noted that this misrepresentation of the \$47 million figure also appeared in [an article](#) in the Times Union about the 2015 event. He also said that whatever figure was used, it would be a sizable sum.

"While those in the Southern Tier are struggling to make ends meet and homeless people in New York City just want a warm bread — all would agree that even \$15 million is money that would be better spent on solving these critical [societal] problems," he said.

That said, there isn't complete agreement among supporters about how much money will be needed for a convention. Estimates have ranged from the famous \$47 million figure to \$108 million.

There are a number of unsettled debates about how a convention might be structured that would have a significant impact on cost. For example, delegates are guaranteed to make the same salary as members of the Assembly. Barring [any statutory change](#) by the end of next year, that would mean that lawmakers elected as delegates would be able to double their salaries and significantly fatten their pensions.

Under one extremely implausible scenario, a convention would essentially be free. Consider, for example, a case in which the Legislature enacted some sought-after reforms and prohibited lawmakers from drawing their regular salaries while serving as delegates. If all of the delegates elected were sitting legislators — a possible scenario frequently noted by convention opponents — the cost for delegates would be nothing more than what the state already pays its legislators. If the delegates then relied mostly on existing staff, there wouldn't be much money spent beyond the costs of buying the extra ink needed to print a few more lines on voters' ballots in 2018 and 2019.

Under another, even more implausible extreme, consider this. Legislators succeed in giving themselves a pay raise next year, as high as \$140,000 a year (which is quite a bit higher than the amounts that have been considered). Under that scenario, the state would need to pay \$28.6 million in salaries for the delegates.

Then, let's assume the convention decides to hire a completely new staff and make expenses equal in size to what the Senate spends in a six-month period. They'd bring in new printers, install new phone lines, hire a new crop of interns, and set up regional offices throughout the state. This would add a little bit more than \$51 million to their budget.

One would also need to factor in the extra costs that would go into paying members' pensions in future years, as their average salary would go increase by virtue of collecting an extra paycheck. If every person elected as a delegate already was on the state payroll for more than nine years by the time the

convention came about and then lived an average of 20 years after retirement, the pension fund could take a hit of about \$80 million.

These three figures would bring the total to \$160 million. That's quite a chunk of change, but it's less than half the cost cited by Flanagan.

The actual cost would likely be somewhere in between these two extremes, or in the range of the \$47 million to \$108 million figures used by advocates.

"There is no way it is going to be \$347 million, that's absolutely crazy," said Dullea, the historian of the 1967 convention. "They'd have to be gold-plating the restrooms or something to accomplish that."

Benjamin views the spread of the \$350 million number as a tactic designed to frighten voters into opposing a convention, which could challenge the familiar status-quo.

"And now we have the classic phenomenon emerging which is people in power trying to prevent reform by using scare tactics not based in fact or evidence," he said.

ANOTHER VOICE: CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION IS NOTHING BUT A CON

BUFFALO NEWS

Anthony Figliola
January 20, 2017

This year, one of the most important legislative issues that will confront Albany legislators will be whether to approve a ballot proposition slated for Nov. 7 to hold a constitutional convention.

On its face, a convention makes sense given the many issues that have stalled in Albany's black hole of bureaucracy over the years. The problem with this philosophy is that it ignores the history of past conventions and the powerful role that politics played in the process.

History has shown that a constitutional convention is nothing more than a carbon copy of a typical legislative session. In short, it's a \$335 million-plus workforce development initiative for the politically connected.

Many good-government groups that have pushed for ethics and campaign finance reform in New York are keen to support a convention, because their efforts over the years have been thwarted by the culture of the status quo.

Many reformers naively accept the premise that seizing on a possible vote for a New York Constitutional Convention will force the State Legislature's hand to pass meaningful reforms.

In theory, it makes sense, but the one variable that will dilute this purist approach is politics. The people who are impotent on the issue of reforms are the same folks who will set the rules, select candidate delegates and ultimately run the convention.

History shows us that while some worthy policies were developed and ratified by the voters, much of the conventions were riddled with rigged agendas and uncontrolled costs. It is important to note that in past conventions, elected officials, including state legislators, have served as delegates at the convention. These pols essentially "double dipped," collecting two salaries that significantly boosted their government pensions.

Let's not forget the lobbyists who love the idea of a conclave, so they can charge their clients another fee to represent them at the convention. The 1967 convention charged taxpayers more than \$45 million (\$335 million in today's dollars) and very little was achieved that could not have been accomplished through a statewide referendum.

In developing the convention rules, many supporters have stated that there will be checks and balances in the rule-making process that will give the power to the people. History has proven that nothing could be further from the truth.

It has been almost 80 years since a convention has produced any constitutional amendments, because politics has been the poison pill.

There is a less costly and more effective approach to changing our constitution and that is the public referendum process, which has successfully amended the constitution more than 200 times. In fact, the constitution has been amended seven times in the last few years using this process, which included the voters approving casino gambling.

Voters seeking good government solutions can't afford the luxury of another convention.

Anthony Figliola is vice president of Empire Government Strategies.

MERITS OF CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION DEBATED

PRESS-REPUBLICAN

Joe Mahoney
October 3, 2016

ALBANY — Those pushing to rewrite New York's 240-year-old Constitution say ethical scandals that have tarnished the State Legislature could have a silver lining by prompting voters to impose reforms.

By law, voters may call a constitutional convention every 20 years, and advocates on both sides are already mobilizing for a November 2017 ballot question that will ask voters whether to convene one.

Much is at stake.

Proponents say a meeting to frame changes to the state's charter is a rare opportunity to drive reforms, such as imposing term limits on lawmakers, crimping the state's ability to borrow money without legislative approval and ending the system of bending district lines of senators and assemblymen to ensure the re-election of powerful incumbents.

"This is an opportunity to deal with a government that's not performing," said Gerald Benjamin, vice president for regional engagement at the State University at New Paltz. "It's an opportunity for direct democracy.

"It's time to press the reset button."

EXPENSE CITED

Critics say a convention could evolve into a boondoggle that accomplishes little but sticking taxpayers with a tab of \$100 million or more for the event.

"The reality is that the convention process in New York has been, for the most part, an expensive, time-consuming production that offers little in terms of accomplishments," wrote Jerry Kremer, a former Long Island assemblyman turned lobbyist, and Anthony Figliola, in a book released this summer.

The thrust of their argument is summed up in their book's title: "Patronage, Waste and Favoritism — A Dark History of Constitutional Convention."

UNION OPPOSITION

In the past, conventions have been opposed by public employee unions, and labor groups are already gearing up to convince New Yorkers to vote down next year's resolution.

"It would open the door for dark money and billionaire hedge-funders to try to buy changes to the constitution that would harm working New Yorkers," said Carl Korn, spokesman for New York State United Teachers, one of the most politically powerful unions in the state.

LAST ONE IN 1967

New York's Constitution was adopted in 1777, 10 years before the U.S. Constitution was drafted. There have been only nine conventions over the past two centuries, the last of which was in 1967.

Delegates then recommended a host of alterations, but voters rejected the package in the statewide elections that followed.

Richard Brodsky, a former Westchester County assemblyman, said he was one of the few Democrats who publicly supported a convention in 1997, but voters rejected a ballot measure to call one.

If voters next year authorize a convention, he said, delegates could tackle such issues as whether there should be a right to higher education at public expense, as well as judicial and electoral reforms.

"I think it is going to be something of a referendum on what it means to be a reformer," said Brodsky. "A lot of people say they want change. But when, all of a sudden, they get a chance to change things, they back off."

SAFETY VALVES

Should voters approve a convention next year, delegates would be elected across the state the following year. Finally, in the third year, delegates would meet for four months to draw up changes to the constitution that would then go before voters for final approval.

"You have a safety valve at every step," said Benjamin, who along with Brodsky is among a team of advisers assembled by the Rockefeller Institute of Government, an Albany think tank, to explain the process to New Yorkers.

While the institute is officially neutral, its advisers are free to speak their minds.

Benjamin and Brodsky are not the only ones supporting a convention.

"There are some serious problems with the state, and the Legislature is not about to solve them," said Peter Galie, a retired Canisius College professor who is an expert in the state's constitutional history and is also on the Rockefeller panel of advisers.

Chances of voters approving a convention seem stronger than they were in 1997, he said, due to recent Albany scandals.

Among those who've been convicted of felony corruption charges are former Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and former Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos of Long Island. Both are appealing their convictions.

ROUTE TO CHANGE

Korn noted a convention is not necessary to change the constitution, which has been amended some 200 times. One such change came in 2013, when voters went along with Gov. Andrew Cuomo's push to drop the prohibition on casino gaming.

Advocates for a convention say it's highly unlikely that delegates will advance "extreme" measures, such as crippling the Civil Service system that protects state workers' jobs or gutting the state's increasingly expensive pension obligations.

Delegates would be mindful that whatever they put forward will need voter approval, Benjamin said.

"Nobody is going to do anything extraordinarily radical," he said.

KEEP THE BILLS IN BUFFALO BY TYING STADIUM DEAL TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BUFFALO NEWS

Anthony M. Figliola
July 6, 2014

The center of the National Football League universe will soon shift to Buffalo, as buyers interested in purchasing the Buffalo Bills franchise move beyond speculative talk and into the serious business of putting money on the table.

They'll need a big table. The Bills' new owner will likely have to come up with at least \$1 billion. The average NFL team is worth \$1.17 billion, according to a 2013 Forbes analysis. The magazine valued the Bills at \$870 million, 30th out of 32 NFL teams. (The Dallas Cowboys topped the list with a value of \$2.3 billion.)

The family of Bills founder Ralph Wilson, who passed away in March, hopes to strike a deal with a new owner by mid-summer.

Among those reportedly interested in buying the Bills are Sabres owners Terry and Kim Pegula, billionaire businessman and former Sabres owner B. Thomas Golisano, real estate mogul Donald Trump and rock star Jon Bon Jovi, who is working with Toronto sports magnate Larry Tannenbaum.

Once a deal is struck and the NFL approves, the new owner will have to deal with the expensive – and politically sensitive – issue of a new stadium.

Ralph Wilson Stadium, which opened in 1973, is currently undergoing a \$130 million renovation, \$90 million of which is coming from New York State. But NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell wants more. He told ESPN that without a new stadium, the Bills might leave.

Buffalo may want to borrow Indianapolis' playbook for building Lucas Oil Stadium, which opened in August 2008. In preparing to build a new home for the Indianapolis Colts, city planners focused on a downtown stadium construction model designed to complement Indianapolis' economic development agenda, which included making the city a national sports mecca.

Construction costs were about \$720 million, with the bulk of the money coming from the state of Indiana and the city of Indianapolis; the Colts kicked in \$100 million. Lucas Oil, owned by Indiana native Forrest Lucas, purchased the naming rights in 2006 for \$121 million over 20 years.

The stadium features expandable seating capacity and a retractable roof that allows games to be played in all weather conditions, two major factors in attracting mega-events such as the Super Bowl and the tourism dollars that come with the tens of thousands of people traveling to them.

Indianapolis has already hosted the NCAA Men's Basketball Regional Finals (2009, 2013, 2014), the NCAA Men's Basketball Final Four (2010) and Super Bowl XLVI (2012). The Big 10 Conference college football championship game will be played at Lucas Oil Stadium through 2021, the NCAA Men's Final Four returns next year and the Women's NCAA Final Four will be there the year after.

If Buffalo goes the new stadium route, the facility must have a roof that will enable it to operate year-round and attract similar events. That will allow the city and the state, which is pumping \$1 billion into the Western New York region to attract businesses and create jobs, to maximize the return on any stadium investment.

A new stadium would create thousands of construction and permanent jobs in and around Buffalo. The team's new owner will have to work closely with city officials and Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo to find a way to pay for either option without saddling Western New York with more debt. On this front, the state has some negotiating room.

According to the consulting firm Conventions, Sports & Leisure International, several NFL teams have covered at least 63 percent of the total cost of building a new stadium, including the New England Patriots (Gillette Stadium), Detroit Lions (Ford Field), Philadelphia Eagles (Lincoln Field) and Dallas Cowboys (AT&T Stadium).

The Buffalo Bills have a long, proud history and a fan base that has remained loyal through the years. The next owner should understand the unique character of the city and commit to creating a sports infrastructure – team and stadium – that supports regional economic development and returns the Bills and Buffalo to their glory days.

Anthony M. Figliola is an economic-development specialist. He is vice president of Empire Government Strategies, a government relations firm based in Uniondale.



Published in the

THE BOND BUYER

Legacy Cost Shadows Lurk over N.Y. City

By Paul Burton

Friday, May 17, 2013

New York City has a balanced budget, strong credit ratings, its lowest unemployment rate in four years, and other positives ranging from lower crime to technology initiatives.

But legacy costs, including pension contributions, retiree health benefits and debt service, hang over the city like a sword of Damocles, and surely will challenge whatever mayor succeeds Michael Bloomberg on Jan. 1.

"I hope the new mayor is not a drinker and if not, maybe they ought to start," said Anthony Figliola, the vice president of Empire Government Strategies, a Uniondale, N.Y., consulting group.

According to the Citizens Budget Commission, legacy costs will consume nearly 25% of the city's budget by fiscal 2015, leaving less money for other priorities. The independent watchdog agency projects pensions to rise from \$3.2 billion to \$8.2 billion between 2005 and 2015, retiree health benefits to double to \$2.4 billion and debt service from major obligations to have spiked from \$4.2 billion to \$7.2 billion, also during that same span.

The CBC includes general obligation and lease purchase debt, and that of the Transitional Finance Authority if the Municipal Assistance Corp. financing arms. On Monday, the city will begin a two-day retail period for its \$800 million GO bond sale.

"Legacy costs are the downfall of many municipalities, without question," Figliola added. "Unions, in return for less in salary, negotiated other initiatives such as pensions and health care. Now the hens are coming home to roost."

Pension overhaul has become a hot-button issue nationally and in the Northeast. Rhode Island in 2011 enacted a bill that state officials expect will reduce its unfunded pension liability by \$3 billion. The measure, which created a hybrid plan that merged conventional public defined-benefit pension plans with 401(k)-style plans, generated national headlines but also faces a court challenge.

Within Rhode Island, Central Falls cut retiree benefits by as much as 55% before exiting bankruptcy court, while Providence reached a compromise with its police and fire retirees that Mayor Angel Taveras said probably saved the capital city from bankruptcy.

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett wants to overhaul the state's two public pension systems amid expected headwinds from unions, the courts and possibly the legislature, where lottery and liquor privatization have taken priority during this session. Inside the Keystone State, Allentown last month agreed to a \$225 million water and sewer system lease deal with the Lehigh County Authority that covered an unfunded pension liability estimated at around \$160 million.



Published in the

THE BOND BUYER

Cas Holloway, Bloomberg's deputy mayor for operations, talked about the need to rein in legacy costs at a recent CBC breakfast meeting at the Princeton Club in midtown Manhattan.

"The city's budget outlook is fragile at best," Holloway said.

Labor contracts and health care present the city's most pressing budgetary challenges, according to Holloway.

"Unless we address these issues together, realistically and comprehensively, there simply is no way the city can afford to continue to provide the level and quality of services that New Yorkers have come to expect without fundamentally destabilizing the city's recovery and long-term prosperity.

"The fundamentals are clear. The city is projected to spend more than it will take in. And with the near exhaustion of roughly \$8 billion of reserves that Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council put aside during the economic boom, closing these gaps is going to require some combination of significant service cuts, raising taxes or finding other ways to cut costs," Holloway said.

Holloway said Bloomberg is prepared to negotiate pay raises for city employees, but not retroactively. City employees have been working under expired contracts. Also, the city wants employees to contribute toward health care coverage, and into a system that emphasizes preventive health measures, such as smoking cessation or weight loss.

According to Holloway, the city could save about \$400 million annually under such a move. The New York City Independent Budget Office, another watchdog agency, estimates even higher, projecting \$489 million in such savings for 2014 and \$535 million and \$587 million the following two years.

"Mounting costs for debt service, pensions and retiree health care will continue to be a challenge," Moody's Investors Service said in March, when the city sold \$180 million in adjustable rate GO bonds. As of Friday morning, the major credit agencies had yet to issue their reports on the sale scheduled for Wednesday.

Holloway spelled out his intentions to the Municipal Labor Committee, an umbrella group that traditionally has negotiated health benefits for city employees. Committee approval is necessary. The city would also have to amend its administrative code.

A message seeking comment was left with committee chairman Harry Nespoli, the president of the city's Uniformed Sanitationmen's Association Local 813. Based on Nespoli's earlier public comments, it appears a labor accord before Bloomberg leaves office is unlikely.

The city has also issued a request for proposals for a new health-care provider. Workers are now covered under the Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York and Group Health Inc. HIP has covered city workers since 1947; today, HIP and Group Health are subsidiaries of Emblem Health under a 2006 merger.

Nicole Gelinas, a senior fellow at the conservative-leaning Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, said union leaders will find it harder to fight any inclusion for health-care contributions.



Published in the

THE BOND BUYER

"Workers haven't been receiving pay raises because health care costs are escalating," she said. "The leadership just thinks that because Bloomberg's a billionaire, they can keep up the fiction and say he's mean."

Even though the mostly Democratic field appears union-friendly, Gelinas said mayoral candidates so far have been treading lightly on bread-and-butter union issues.

"The candidates had their favorite programs – Bill Thompson talked about cops, Bill de Blasio had pre-kindergarten and for Christine Quinn, it was day care tax credits. But none of these people were very bullish about speaking up for the unions," Gelinas said.

A Manhattan Institute-Zogby Analytics poll released May 13 said many New Yorkers found the city getting too expensive. According to Gelinas, the ripple effect of high legacy costs is resonating. "New Yorkers have clearly noticed the impact of ever-higher spending on pensions and health benefits on the ground and underground; the city's transportation system is not capable of serving the needs of New Yorkers, particularly New Yorkers in the outer boroughs."

The poll said only 21% of respondents feel that public transportation adequately serves the outer boroughs – Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens and Staten Island. About 73% of Staten Islanders called for additional investment.

"That was interesting about our poll. Many of the other responses were typically split down the middle. But the biggest disappointment was from people in the outer boroughs who said they weren't well served by public transportation," Gelinas said.

Figliola acknowledged the difficulty of negotiating with unions in New York. "Unions work hard for their memberships. They're powerful. They have foot soldiers on the ground during campaign time."

According to Figliola, Andrew Cuomo was better able to implement the more conservative parts of his first-year program as New York governor in 2011 because he was not beholden to unions.

"One of the things interesting to me was that Cuomo took no union support. In his first year he was able to implement the property tax cap and the pension tiers. He didn't take money. I don't see that happening this time around," he said.

PUBLIC POLICY EXPERT ANTHONY FIGLIOLA, ANNOUNCES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IDEAS TO CREATE JOBS IN AMERICA

PRWEB

PRWEB

December 14, 2011

The United States is currently running a deficit of over \$14 Trillion with a quarter of Americans living at or below the poverty line. Unemployment has remained over 9 percent for over 24 consecutive months and both the White House and Congress failed to pass mandatory budget cuts through the Super Committee to save our economy.

“People are in bad shape and something needs to be done to rebuild our nation, but not at the expense of the taxpayers,” said Anthony Figliola, economic development professional and Vice President of Empire Government Strategies. “The good news is that there are many initiatives Washington can enact, which can put Americans back to work without raising taxes.”

Anthony Figliola is the former Deputy Supervisor of Economic Development for the Town of Brookhaven, one of America’s largest municipalities. During his time in government he was directly responsible economic and energy policy. He worked with businesses seeking government incentives to grow as well as developed workforce development programs to put people back to work.

He continued his work in economic development in the private sector and in total has helped to create over 3,500 new jobs. In addition he obtained over \$800 million in government grants for businesses, which invested over \$2 billion in capital projects.

Utilizing his past experience in job creation and economic development, Mr. Figliola outlined several steps the federal government should take to stimulate job growth in America.

Support Oil and Natural Gas Exploration: currently there are trillions of cubic feet of oil and natural gas shales under our feet. The EPA and states including New York need to approve continued exploration, so that our country can significantly reduce its dependence on foreign oil and create tens of thousands of jobs for Americans. For example, the Obama Administration has an opportunity to approve the expansion of the [Keystone XL Pipeline](#) down to the Gulf of Mexico. This project has the potential to create over 20,000 jobs at no cost to the taxpayers, however, the project has been stalled.

Repatriate U.S. Cash from Overseas: right now there is over \$2 trillion in profits made by U.S. corporations sitting in overseas accounts. The Congress should pass legislation to allow those corporations to bring that money back home at a one-time discounted tax rate. The caveat would be

that 3% of taxable earnings would be put into an Economic Development fund designed to help small businesses looking for capital to grow.

Create a Federal Economic Development Fund: This fund would be managed by a non-profit entity oversaw by the [Department of Commerce](#) and the Congress. This fund would solicit competitive applications for funding from all 50 states. Each state currently has programs that provide financial support to growing businesses and workforce training projects. The mechanism and oversight has already been established by the states. They have access to businesses ready to expand, but funds are limited. A competitive grant program similar to the Race to the Top initiative would immediately create badly needed jobs for struggling state economies.

Anthony Figliola has been published and regularly interviewed for his expertise in economic development and public policy for media outlets such as: [NBC News](#), Chicago Tribune, New York Times, [Newsday](#), Finance & Commerce, Long Island Business News, New York Metro, BusinessWeek and many more.

ANALYSIS OF BUDGET

LABOR PRESS

Anthony M. Figliola
April 5, 2011

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver today announced an agreement on a 2011 – 2012 budget that eliminates a \$10 billion deficit. The agreement includes reforms that redesign state government, create efficiencies through consolidation, cap spending increases for education and Medicaid, and transform the future budgeting process.

The approximately \$132.5 billion budget will reduce spending overall by over 2 percent from the current year, eliminate 3,700 prison beds, establish regional economic development councils, bring performance funding to education, redesign Medicaid, and cap next year's education and Medicaid spending.

This budget reaches its financial goals with no new taxes and no borrowing, and will also cut next year's projected budget deficit from \$15 billion to about \$2 billion.

Recent changes to the budget include an additional \$272 million in education, which includes restoration of funding for schools for the blind and deaf (4201) and summer school special education. Human services funding of \$91 million was added and \$86 million for higher education including SUNY hospitals, SUNY and CUNY community colleges. There are also miscellaneous program additions of \$33 million including aid to localities and agriculture programs. There were also \$54 million in miscellaneous cuts. As a result, the net add spending to this budget is approximately \$250 million. In addition, there are no new member items.

The 2011-2012 Budget agreement

Changing Permanent Law and Provides 2 Year Appropriations and Caps for Education and Medicaid: Education will be increased at a rate of personal income growth next year roughly 4 percent. Medicaid will be increased at a rate tied to healthcare CPI that is roughly 4 percent. Together, these actions reduce next year's deficit from about \$15 billion to about \$2 billion and change decades old practice of overspending.

Redesigning the Medicaid System: The budget includes a global cap on State Medicaid expenditures of approximately \$15 billion and implementation of the majority of recommendations by the Medicaid Redesign Team (MRT) to redesign and restructure the Medicaid program to be more efficient and get better results for patients. There are reallocations within the MRT cap that reduce some areas while targeting increases to others. Among the notable changes: the cap on medical malpractice is not included and EPIC is increased by \$22 million. The MRT reduction of \$2.8 billion and the overall spending cap to the state will be enforced by the Department of Health's "superpower" provision, whereby the

commissioner has authority to make reductions during the year to enforce the cap.

Creating Regional Economic Development Councils: The budget establishes 10 Regional Economic Development Councils, chaired by Lieutenant Governor Robert Duffy. These councils will create a region based approach to allocate economic development funds to speed up the creation of jobs. They will act as one stop shop for all State supported economic development and business assistance programs in each region, and will be supported with \$130 million in capital that is reprogrammed from existing resources.

Local Government Efficiency Grants: \$44 Million will go to one time grants to local governments and special districts to reorganize, consolidate, or achieve performance improvements. Also money will be allocated to cover the costs associated with local government efficiency projects such as: planning and implementation of shared service programs and regionalized delivery of services.

Recharge NY Power Program: Recharge New York will enhance and make permanent the current Power for Jobs Program that will significantly boost the state's economy by creating and maintaining hundreds of thousands of jobs. Recharge New York will improve upon the existing program by opening it to new participants and allocating a blend of stable, low cost hydropower and market power for use by businesses that seek to grow and create jobs in New York State.

Authorizing the SAGE Commission: The budget authorizes Governor Cuomo's Spending and Government Efficiency (SAGE) Commission to reduce the number of agencies, authorities, and commissions by 20 percent. Currently, the consolidation of Parole and Corrections will save \$16.8 million, the merging of NYSTAR into Department of Economic Development will save \$1.9 million, and the merging of Consumer Protection into the Department of State will save \$500,000.

Creating the Department of Financial Services: The budget merges the state's Banking and Insurance Departments into a new Department of Financial Services.

Authorizing Governor to Close Prisons: The state will eliminate 3,700 prison beds throughout New York at the sole discretion of the administration in consultation with the Legislature.

SUNY Flexibility (UB 2020): The Governor has also agreed to hold a summit with stakeholders to discuss how to make UB 2020 a reality. Left out of the conversation is the provision for SUNY Albany, Binghamton, and Stony Brook University. Look for the three left out groups to become more involved in the process this session.

Reforming the Juvenile Justice System: The budget includes significant reforms of the state's juvenile justice system by encouraging greater use of community-based alternatives, downsizing the state juvenile facilities system by more than 30 percent, and investing resources into enhanced services for juveniles that remain in OCFS custody.

Education Performance Grants: The budget enacts initiatives Governor Cuomo proposed to make

districts more efficient and improve student performance. Funds totaling \$500 million will be awarded competitively to districts that demonstrate significant improvements in student performance and to districts that undertake long term structural changes to reduce costs and improve efficiency. The budget also restores \$270 million in education related funding.

Improving the Excelsior Jobs Program: As proposed in the executive budget, the budget strengthens the Excelsior Jobs Program, which was created in 2010 to provide job creation and investment tax credit incentives to businesses in targeted industries.

EMPIRE GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES CELEBRATES MAJOR LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES OF 2010

BENZINGA

Benzinga

January 3, 2011

The Northeast's leading lobbying firm highlights major victories by helping clients obtain millions in government grants and defeating legislation harmful to small businesses, electronics industry, lending institutions, entertainment, travel and tourism industries.

Uniondale, NY (Vocus/PRWEB) January 03, 2011

Empire Government Strategies, has enjoyed another banner year for the company and it's clients. Empire had numerous victories in the legislative area, and in the policy and regulatory arena.

This year Empire was named the "third fastest growing government relations firm in New York State," according to the New York Public Interest Research Group. Due to the Empire's rapid growth it has expanded operations beyond New York into Washington D.C., and now represents clients throughout the Northeast.

Former Assemblyman Arthur "Jerry" Kremer, President of EGS, highlighted several recent successes on behalf of their clients, which include: getting the statewide E-waste legislation modified and amended to protect electronic manufacturers; defeated nuisance taxes aimed at the entertainment, travel and tourism industries; and obtained millions in government grants for municipalities and private businesses.

"The key to success is listening to the client's needs and understanding how to execute an effective strategy," said Kremer. "Having spend 23-years in public office I understand how government works and how to avoid the stumbling blocks that so many organizations hit when dealing with government agencies."

The Empire team working on behalf of the Debt Buying industry held off permanently, legislation that would have cut off the credit markets in New York and denied consumers access to much needed bank loans.

"Empire's strategy was as savvy as it was successful, and I have greatly enjoyed working with them," said Christian Parker, General Counsel for Cavalry Portfolio Services. I could not have asked for better guides to the world of Albany. Thank you for your excellent work on behalf of the debt buyers."

Recently Empire succeeded in obtaining a \$5 million grant on behalf of a municipal client to help fund a major infrastructure project that saved tax dollars. This grant was the largest award given out among all statewide applicants.

“Many organizations are now facing new challenges with the proposed elimination of federal and state member items,” says Anthony M. Figliola, Vice President of EGS. “However, there are still grants available, you just need the right guide who knows where to look.”

Empire Government Strategies was founded by the Hon. Arthur Jerry Kremer, a 23-year veteran of the New York State Assembly and former Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. Empire is co-managed by Anthony M. Figliola, Vice President of EGS and former Deputy Supervisor to the Town of Brookhaven, one of the nation's largest municipal governments.

EGS maintains fully staffed offices in Albany, Washington D.C., New York, and Long Island. EGS was recently named the third fastest growing lobbying firm in New York State, by the New York Public Interest Research Group. Our approach to servicing clients is different from the traditional lobbying firm.

BUNGLING NEW YORK STATE BUREAUCRATS FUMBLE \$200+ MILLION IN LOST REVENUES FROM FAILED TAX AMNESTY PROGRAM

PR NEWswire

PR Newswire
December 15, 2010

NEW YORK, Dec. 15, 2010 /PRNewswire/ -- Today Empire Government Strategies <<http://www.empiregovernmentstrategies.com/>> (EGS), the Northeast's lobbying and grassroots organization, released an evaluation of New York State's failed Tax Amnesty Program today revealing how the state bungled an opportunity to collect at least \$200 million in owed taxes. The study provides a full account of New York State's previous tax amnesty initiatives from 1985 to present and an analysis of other states' successes.

New York State lost more than \$200 million in potential revenue as the result of a poorly executed delinquent tax recovery plan. The state is currently owed a staggering \$2.5 - \$4.2 billion from delinquent taxpayers. A combination of wavering and indifferent tax officials and a half-hearted execution led to a complete failure, with a gross collection of only \$45 million, 82 percent short of the forecasted \$250 million in revenue.

Highlighting New York State's lost opportunity is California's Tax Amnesty Program, which generated over \$4.2 billion in 2005; Pennsylvania's, which collected \$261 million this year, a 47.4 percent increase above the original estimate; and New Jersey's, which collected \$725 million in 2009 or 625 percent over the forecasted amount.

"Temporary tax increases are not the answer," argues Jerry Kremer<<http://www.empiregovernmentstrategies.com/ourteam.htm>> , Chairman of EGS, former Assembly Ways and Means Committee Chair and a 23-year New York State Assembly veteran. "Gimmicks, such as taxing tobacco, soda and drinks containing sugar, and raising vehicle registration fees are short-term solutions and rarely raise enough to meet the legislature's estimates."

New York has successfully executed multiple tax amnesty programs in the past. Since 1985, it has conducted three general tax amnesty programs that raised a combined total of \$1.6 billion. In stark contrast, New York raised only 1.5 percent of that total in 2010 with its Penalty Interest Discount Program that was widely criticized by both business leaders and legislators for being poorly managed, insufficiently publicized, and having relied on outdated techniques.

The Voluntary Compliance Program lacked publicity, defined terms, and support from state agencies. Shockingly, the Department of Taxation and Finance inaccurately stated that, "no tax amnesty program

was in place," on its own website. The only information made available to the public on the matter was a single press released issued on January 13, 2010.

SOLUTION: 3-PRONGED TAX AMNESTY PROGRAM

For 2011, Empire Government Strategies advises the implementation of a well-planned tax amnesty program - a protocol with a history of success in reducing state budget deficits and raising state government revenues. "Lawmakers in both houses must support a full amnesty program in an enthusiastic manner," says Anthony

Figliola <http://www.empiregovernmentstrategies.com/ourteam.htm> , Vice President of Empire Government Strategies. "Asking debtors to pay for past debts that may or may not have existed is futile. However, publicizing a program that provides debtors with an opportunity to pay back delinquent taxes is a way to repair the NYS budget and encourage regular tax payments - once a tax payer, always a tax payer."

Further, tax amnesty provides assistance to state and local governments to close budget deficits via unpaid taxes by both individuals and corporations. The program allows those with outstanding fees to make payments without additional penalties or risk of prosecution. In other words, the state can now collect money it has been unable to - a measurable benefit to New York State coffers.

To ensure a successful program based on proven tactics, the report recommends the following three steps:

Carrot and Stick: The "reward and punishment" model forgives all penalties and interest to encourage New York Statetaxpayer settlements while increasing collection enforcement and ramping up penalties for individuals that remain in a delinquent status. Once a taxpayer is on the books, they are prone to pay taxes on time.

Marketing Strategy: A well planned grassroots strategy is central to the success of a tax amnesty program in New York State. A successful public outreach program will accomplish two major goals: reach the greatest number of people and advertise the most convenient method of filing returns. It is recommended that a future amnesty program use direct mail, call centers, interactive websites, early sign-up opportunities and creative advertising.

Low Administrative Costs: The cost of marketing and program administration has remained low in comparison to the revenues of the tax amnesty program, generating a large ROI for the State of New York. The Penalty Interest Discount Program did not provide a sufficient ROI. Having both houses and the Department of Taxation and Finance on board will keep operation costs low and the program's carry-out timely. When the program reaches its final states, a public push will be made for stiffer penalties for future debtors, thus encouraging current and past debtors to comply with NYS tax laws.

For more information on the study or to receive it in full, please contact Jerry Kremer or Anthony Figliola of Empire Government Strategies at (516) 663-6684. More information on Empire Government

Strategies is available at its

website: www.empiregovernmentstrategies.com <<http://www.empiregovernmentstrategies.com/>> .

About Empire Government Strategies

Empire Government Strategies <<http://www.empiregovernmentstrategies.com/index.htm>> (EGS) is the Northeast's major lobbying and grassroots organization headquartered in Long Island with offices in Albany, New York and Washington D.C. EGS is headed by former Assembly Ways and Means Chair, Arthur "Jerry" Kremer. Mr. Kremer also was Chairman of Legislative Commission on Expenditure Review.

The Empire team has achieved great success in representing clients in Washington and Albany on complex legislative and regulatory issues. In addition, Empire has assisted private and not-for-profit corporations and local governments with access to federal and state grants. With a national network of seasoned government affairs professionals, EGS has developed solid regional public outreach programs for numerous private and public development projects.

Gaining support or opposition to legislation is no longer a simple one-one-one process. It involves recruiting allies at the local level who will express their views to their elected officials, who are often guided by business and community reaction.

SOURCE Empire Government Strategies

FORMER N.Y. STATE ASSEMBLYMAN ARTHUR "JERRY" KREMER STARTS NEW LOBBYING FIRM

LONG ISLAND BUSINESS NEWS

Henry E. Powderly II
February 26, 2009

Former state Assemblyman Arthur "Jerry" Kremer has started a new lobbying firm, **Empire Government Strategies**.

The firm, which has offices in Albany, Manhattan and Washington D.C., represents clients like the Long Island Power Authority, Canon USA, Caithness Energy, the Long Island Convention and Visitors Bureau, Autism Speaks and the Town of Brookhaven.

In fact, the firm hired Brookhaven's former deputy chief of staff, **Anthony Figliola**, to work with businesses looking for state grants to expand or make their businesses more environment friendly.

Interestingly, concervative LIBN columnist George Marlin this week lambasted Kremer for daring to defend former LIPA head Richard Kessel without admitting he had once been a paid lobbyist for the power company. Marlin had previously written a column blaming Kessel for LIPA's current problems.

However, Marlin wrote about how Kremer's lobbyist ties to LIPA were cut by new chief executive Kevin Law. Now, it looks like Kremer's back in the utility's corner.

Kremer is also a regional political pundit and writes a weekly column for LIBN.

NEW YORK STATE BALLOT QUESTION

2017

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

New York State's Constitution requires that every 20 years the ballot have a question about having a convention. If the public votes to have a convention, then the following year delegates are elected by the citizens to attend the convention. At the convention the delegates propose amendments to the constitution. Citizens then vote on the proposed amendments.

A Yes Vote:

Allows the public in 2018 to elect delegates to propose amendments to the constitution at a convention held in 2019.

Vote Yes Arguments:

- Brian Kolb (Republican District 131), Assembly Minority Leader stated: "The beauty and necessity of a Constitutional Convention lies in its ability to reform the system and empower the people of New York to facilitate needed change. Voter empowerment is part of the very fabric of who we are as a nation. There is no more effective way to engage the public than a Constitutional Convention, and there is no place that needs it more than Albany."

- Evan Davis, a lawyer who served as counsel to former Gov. Mario Cuomo (Democrat) and manager of the Committee for a Constitutional Convention, said: "There are a number of changes that need to be made to strengthen the constitution that the Legislature is never going to adopt ... so the only way to get these changes made is to get it through a convention where the people would elect delegates committed to making the changes."

A No Vote:

No convention will be held in 2019. The next time the public can vote on whether or not to have a constitutional convention will be in 2027.

Vote No Arguments:

- The United Federation of Teachers stated: "A constitutional convention is unlimited in the scope of what it could change. This would place New York State's rights and protections at risk of alteration or elimination, including the guarantee of a free public education, a prohibition against aid to non-public schools and the right to Workers' Compensation. The right to unionize and bargain collectively and state requirements regarding pensions and social welfare could also wind up on the chopping block."

- Anthony Figliola, vice president of Empire Government Strategies, said: "History has shown that a constitutional convention is nothing more than a carbon copy of a typical legislative session. In short, it's a \$335 million-plus workforce development initiative for the politically connected. There is a less costly and more effective approach to changing our constitution and that is the public referendum process, which has successfully amended the constitution more than 200 times."

ANTHONY M. FIGLIOLA

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Anthony M. Figliola

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Anthony has been actively involved in public policy for over 16 years. He is the former Deputy Supervisor for Economic Development in the City of Brookhaven, the state’s second largest municipality.

For the past eight years, he has worked in the private sector assisting businesses, non-profits as well as state and local government agencies in a variety of important projects and policy goals. A few of the projects that Anthony has helped to advance include: approving the nation’s most comprehensive renewable energy program bringing over 600 MW of power including renewable energy to New York City; assisting businesses and local governments in obtaining over \$100 million in economic incentives; designing economic development policy to measure the state’s return on investment, which included a software system to track economic development projects in real time – a precursor to Governor Cuomo’s Regional Council and CFA program. His efforts in economic development led to the creation and retention of over 10,000 jobs and more than \$2.5 billion in private capital investments.

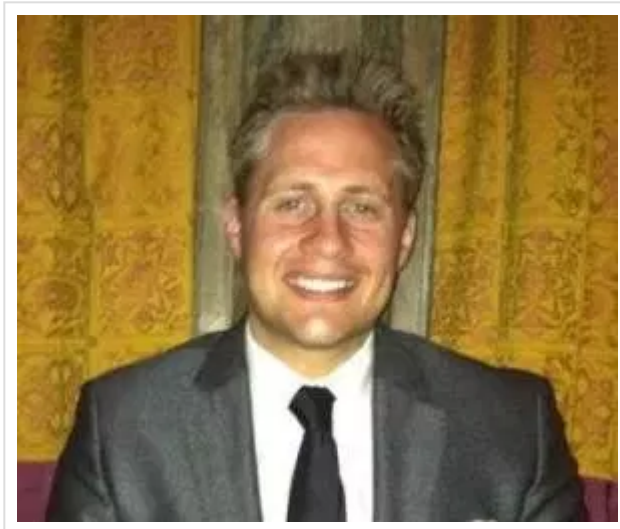
He is also co-author of the report *Tax Amnesty – Past Successes, Failures and New Opportunities*, which identified over \$2 billion in unpaid taxes owed to the State of New York. The report provides a comprehensive analysis on how some of those moneys can be recouped through an aggressive program.

Anthony received his B.A. in Political Science and M.A. in Public Policy from Stony Brook University, where he was a member of the Alumni Board. He has written articles on a variety of political, sports and human-interest topics for media outlets such as The Huffington Post, New York Post, Daily News, San Francisco Chronicle, New York Journal, Metro NY, Buffalo News and the Philadelphia Inquirer.

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Prominent New Yorkers

Anthony Figliola, Empire Government Strategies Vice President



[Anthony M. Figliola](#) Vice President of Empire Government Strategies brings a decade of experience in government affairs, sales & marketing, economic development, fundraising, and project management.

Anthony has leveraged his experience to assist firm clients that include Canon U.S.A., Caithness Energy, New York Power Authority, PSEG, Monster Energy, Association for Better Healthcare, Debt Buyers Association, Summit Security Services, NYS Bowling Proprietors, and the Town of North Hempstead.

Anthony is the former Deputy Supervisor for the Town of Brookhaven – New York’s second largest municipality. During his tenure he oversaw the town’s economic and energy initiatives. In that role he managed a portfolio of expanding businesses generating over \$1 billion in capital investments, and securing over \$300 million in government incentives for those businesses to expand and relocate.

As Vice President of Empire, Anthony has developed a series of unique strategies that have helped his clients achieve enormous success in Washington and Albany. Some of those successes include: defeating harmful taxes on the transportation and entertainment industries, helped to pass groundbreaking electronic waste laws, and secured millions in government incentives for the firm's clients.

Anthony previously worked as a professional fundraiser for federal, state, and local campaigns. He holds a B.A. in Political Science and a Masters degree in Public Policy from Stony Brook University, where he is a member of the Alumni Board of Directors. He is also active in his local church and volunteer's time to assist faith-based organizations in obtaining grants.

ADVERTISEMENT



Team

ack



Anthony M. Figliola

Chief Operating Officer

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[Download V-Card](#)

Education: Stony Brook University, (B.A., Political Science; M.A., Public Policy) | University of Oklahoma, Economic Development Institute

Honesty and integrity is the sine que non, that drives success in business and in life.

Anthony M. Figliola brings two-decades of experience in multiple disciplines: government affairs, communications & marketing, economic development, and business development.

He has leveraged my vast public and private sector experience to assist clients from start-up to enterprise level on navigating through the government bureaucracy. During my career I have helped to secure over \$820 million in capital incentives for businesses and local governments resulting in over 10,000 new and retained jobs.

What Client Projects Did You Find the Most Rewarding?

Protecting the State’s Fragile Groundwater. One the most rewarding moments of my career was when I successfully advocated to hold polluters of our state’s drinking water accountable. I quarterbacked passage of a groundbreaking law that was unanimously approved by the legislature – giving public water suppliers greater leverage in suing known polluters.

Supporting Families & Children with Special Needs: I was blessed to work with a non-profit that was seeking to build a new facility to support their education programs for children on the spectrum as well as for veterans and women with PTSD. Working with the state legislature, I was able to secure funding to develop this new facility for the public’s benefit.

Electrifying the Long Island Rail Road – PJ Branch: The LIRR is one of busiest commuter rail systems in the United States. Most branch lines have upgraded to electric rails with the exception of the busiest branch, which transports over 18 million passengers per year. I helped to create and lead a coalition of community & environmental groups, chambers and local elected officials to galvanize support to fund this major infrastructure project that will foster new development to communities in its catchment area. The net result will increase property values, reduce carbon emissions as well attract new businesses and local development projects. I worked with the MTA and state officials to secure \$4M for a feasibility study.

A Little More About Me

Anthony was the youngest person to serve as a Deputy Supervisor for the Town of Brookhaven – New York’s second largest suburban municipality. During his tenure he was a senior member of the Town’s management team with responsibility for its more than 2,000 employees and \$200 million budget. In that role he also managed a portfolio of expanding businesses generating over \$1 billion in capital investments as well as developed BR&E and workforce development programs. He is especially proud to have developed the town’s minimum wage policy for Industrial development Agency certified businesses – a first in the state. Anthony previously worked as a fundraiser and communications professional.

Working full time and going to school in the evening he successfully earned several degrees and certifications including a B.A. in Political Science and a Masters Degree in Public Policy from Stony Brook University. Anthony is also a graduate of the University of Oklahoma’s Economic Development Institute.

“My faith is at the core of who I am and it is what guides my actions as a professional, husband and father. I am active in my local church and I am married to the love of my life and we have three beautiful children.”

Boards

- [New York League of Conservation Voters](#), Board Member – Long Island Chapter

Published

- Co-Author: Congestion Pricing in NYC – Deal or No Deal? (2019)
- Co-Author: Patronage, Waste and Favoritism – A Dark History of Constitutional Conventions (2016)
- Co-Author: *Tax Amnesty – Past Successes, Failures* and New Opportunities (2012)

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Patronage, Waste and Favoritism
- A Dark History of Constitutional
Conventions

Anthony Figliola

Public Administration / Economic & Business Development /
Communications / Author
Uniondale

Summary

Achievement-driven executive with outstanding qualifications in operational management, business development, advocacy, communications and economic development. In-depth program management experience from conception to implementation through team development and leadership skills. At ease with budget limitations, deadlines, and high pressure situations. Strong ability to influence thinking, forge strategic alliances and build consensus.

Experience

Empire Government Strategies COO

October 2008 - Present (12 years 6 months)
Greater New York City Area

EGS specializes in economic development, lobbying, and public affairs. Responsibilities include business development & operations, communications and client management for corporations, state and local governments, and not-for-profits. Assists clients to focus their strategies, grow their business and drive system-level change.

Town of Brookhaven Deputy Supervisor of Economic Development January 2006 - October 2008 (2 years 10 months)

High performing public official for one of the nation's largest municipalities, implementing revitalizing strategies to locate growing companies and increase visibility and attractiveness. Part of a management team that with cross functional responsibilities including overseeing 2,000 municipal employees and the development & management of a \$200M plus budget. Responsible for facilitating, promoting and ensuring the attraction of new business to the region and development of energy policy.

Self Advisor: Finance, Policy and Communications

June 2001 - January 2006 (4 years 8 months)

Long Island, NY

Expertise generating revenue and increasing support bases for political campaigns. Created and directed 25 federal, state, and local political fundraising operations. Generated \$4 million dollars through effective major gift solicitations, creative sponsorship opportunities, and donor cultivation events. Oversaw large scale political events with celebrities and national political figures.

Suffolk County Legislature

Deputy Communications Director

February 2003 - December 2003 (11 months)

Education

Stony Brook University

M.A., Public Policy · (2005 - 2006)

University of Oklahoma

Certification, Economic Development Institute · (2019 - 2020)

Stony Brook University

B.A., Political Science · (2000 - 2003)