

April 18, 2012

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

I would first like to congratulate you on your strong and visionary leadership for the good people of New York. Your handling of the serious budget issues that have affected our region during this economic downturn and your noteworthy and often cited leadership on education issues have been commendable.

However, it has come to the attention of Connecticut lawmakers that Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer has requested the New York state legislature reinstitute the New York City commuter tax. The revival of this controversial tax would be detrimental to the mutual interests and long standing cooperation between the state of Connecticut and the state of New York.

Mr. Stringer's proposal would levy a 0.45% tax for commuters who work in New York City, but who do not live there, adversely affecting many Connecticut residents.

Currently, Connecticut commuters who work in New York already pay New York state income tax on the wages they earn there, and some also pay a city income tax if they reside there for part of the year. This proposal would potentially add a third tax on Connecticut residents who are already the most heavily taxed in the country. The combined tax burden on Connecticut residents includes, the state income tax, sales tax (including a new luxury tax), gas tax, petroleum gross receipts tax, car property tax, real estate tax, conveyance tax, inheritance tax, taxes on pensions, and other annoyance taxes and fees too numerous to count. As a result, Connecticut residents have the latest tax freedom day in the nation (May 5th –Tax Foundation).

In other words, they must work the longer than residents in any other state before they can start earning for themselves. Numerous efforts to revive this onerous commuter tax were defeated due to the recognition that legislators such as myself and Connecticut governors would fight it and could ultimately respond by instituting a commuter tax of our own for New York residents who work in Connecticut. It should be noted that there are now more New York commuters coming into Connecticut to work in Greenwich, Stamford and Norwalk during the 8 am-9 am timeframe than Connecticut commuters going into New York. New York legislators should be careful due to the strong possibility that New York businesses that are led by Connecticut residents (and there are many) or have senior officers that reside here may decide that this tax would be the tipping point in relocating their businesses across the border to Connecticut.

Again, New York's legislators should proceed cautiously in taking this drastic step in taxing Connecticut residents more. We are watching this development closely and hope you will use your influence and high standing with the people and leaders of New York to halt the advancement of this proposal which would be burdensome to those residents who regularly commute between our states.

Sincerely,

Toni Boucher
Connecticut State Senator
26th Senatorial District