

## **The Empire State Rising: New York's Call to Reclaim American Exceptionalism**

There is a reason the nation watches New York. Not simply because of our towering skyline or our bustling streets. Not just because of our unmatched diversity or our cultural legacy. But because, time and time again, New York has been the crucible in which American identity is forged—and often redefined. From the soaring anthems of Billy Joel and Alicia Keys to the poetry of Bob Dylan and Nas, or the smoothness of Tony Bennett, New York has always echoed the voice of the people—raw, real, and resilient. And in our politics, we have been a state of contrasts and greatness: producing a Mario Cuomo and a Donald Trump, two sons of New York who stand on opposite ideological poles but each made their mark on the national stage. Their stories—so different, yet so definitively New York—are reminders that this state breeds visionaries. It also teaches us that strength lies in contrast, and greatness in synthesis.

Today New York faces a choice. The gap between the haves and have-nots—the very tale of two cities Mario Cuomo once decried—has widened. Wages stagnate while wealth accumulates. Labor is dismissed while capital is rewarded. American Exceptionalism, once our north star, is being fractured by partisanship, cynicism, and a lack of empathy. But New York can lead again. And this time, it can be our unity—not our division—that sets the tone for the nation.

### **A New Era of Strength through Unity**

American Exceptionalism is not about dominance—it's about a democratic promise fulfilled through strength, solidarity, and compassion. When we treat people as statistics, we justify policies that harm them. But when we see people—truly see them—we govern for the general welfare, the greatest good for the greatest number. That is not just utilitarian, it is American. This platform is built on that principle. It advocates for a trickle-up economy, powered by family-level independence and shared prosperity, not corporate trickle-down theories. It defends labor with the reverence it deserves, and reorients our tax system to reward work, not just wealth. It envisions government not as a burden, but as a partner—effective, nimble, and responsive, especially when united with the private sector under shared goals.

This platform proposes:

- A \$20/hour minimum wage paired with targeted tax credits for small employers to help businesses grow alongside their workers.
- A 2% national consumption tax to simplify the IRS tax code, reduce deficits, fund Social Security, and mitigate federal income tax on wages—helping workers keep more of what they earn.
- A legislative Department of Government Efficiency that streamlines bureaucracies, updates policy in real time, and makes government a lever of innovation, not stagnation.
- An emphasis on civic integrity—campaign reforms that limit the influence of wealth in politics and ensure every citizen's voice weighs as much as the next.
- Bold investment in public education, responsible AI development, domestic energy production, and intergenerational prosperity.

These policies are not just responses to our challenges—they are a rebuke to the ideological retrenchment seen in blueprints like Project 2025, which seek to consolidate power at the top and roll back the progress made by labor, by women, by minorities, by science, and by working families. We say: No. We build forward, together.

### **From the Wollman Rink to the American Dream**

We've seen what unity can accomplish. Look no further than the Wollman Rink—an emblem of bureaucratic stagnation until one private citizen stepped in to finish the job under budget and ahead of schedule. That story wasn't about politics—it was about partnership, about cutting through the noise to deliver for the people. That's what governance should be. When government and private ingenuity align, when labor and capital move in tandem, when compassion and pragmatism coexist, we can make the pie bigger, not just fight over who gets the largest slice. That is the engine of true prosperity. Not tax abatements for the powerful, but consumption and growth shared by all.

### **New York: The Shining City on the Hill**

Let us imagine what New York can be again: a shining city upon a hill, not because we are perfect, but because we are bold enough to evolve, brave enough to lead, and wise enough to unify. Let us end the tale of two cities. Let us build a future where a kid in Brentwood, in Hempstead, or in Queens Village believes—not hypothetically, but realistically—that the American Dream is for them. And when that future is secured here, in this Empire State, it won't stop at our borders. As it always has, New York will show the rest of the country the way forward.

### **A Legacy Continued**

Mario Cuomo and Donald Trump—opposites in every way. Yet each became an icon; each born of this place; each shaped a movement. I, too, am a son of New York. I don't seek to become either man—but to learn from both. To build a politics that honors labor without shaming wealth, that unites the bold with the compassionate, and that restores American Exceptionalism as a lived experience—not a slogan. In this, we can all be the next Cuomo. The next Trump. The next leader this nation needs. Let's make New York lead again.