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STATEMENT FROM DAVID R. JONES, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICE SOCIETY, ON GOVERNOR CUOMO'S STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

Each year, the state's chief executive takes center stage in early January and lays out his vision for advancing the state toward a more prosperous future. Today, Gov. Cuomo used his State of the State address to signal that his blueprint for New York calls for roughly \$25 billion in infrastructure investment, revitalization projects and economic development initiatives that will spur job creation in the city and across the state.

We applaud the governor's economic development vision. New York needs to act boldly to stimulate the economy, and create opportunities that bring jobs to New York. It is our hope that the governor's ambitious job-creation offensive will include those who have been hardest hit by the tough economic times -- namely young people, especially the less-educated among them, and older workers who have been out of work for months if not years.

To his credit, the governor has taken initial steps to target the chronic issue of youth unemployment. More needs to be done, however, if we are to make a real impact on the problem. A good place to start would be increasing GED programs and other efforts to connect high school dropouts to education, training and jobs. And just as the governor took credit today for closing 3,800 prison beds and 370 juvenile facility beds, he can show further leadership by ensuring that time spent in prison is meaningful. If prisoners have increased access to higher education and enhanced vocational programming, there's a greater chance that after serving their time they will be in a better position to find decent employment.

Turning attention to the systemic problems associated with the state's health insurance market, the governor called for legislation to create a New York Health Insurance Exchange. In doing so, the State will be able to access federal funding to fully implement our exchange and allow one million uninsured New Yorkers to gain coverage. Millions more who already have insurance coverage, but struggle to pay for it every month, will see their costs significantly reduced.

The State of the State address is a time for optimism, as it should be. We have great hope for New York's future. As the governor and the legislature tackle these issues, we look forward to working with them, and offer our help.

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For more than 165 years, the [Community Service Society of New York](http://www.cssny.org) has been the leading voice on behalf of low-income New Yorkers and continues to advocate for the economic security of the working poor in the nation's largest city. We respond to urgent, contemporary challenges with applied research, advocacy, litigation and innovative program models that help the working poor achieve a better quality of life and promote a more prosperous city.