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[The Governor's Budget Does Not Reflect Reform Jewish Values](#)

In response to Gov. Cuomo's planned budget, Honey Heller and Donald C. Cutler, RJV Co-Chairs, announced, "Governor Cuomo's attempt to balance the state budget on the backs of those who can least afford it is unacceptable. The budget is the great moral document of our state, and its priorities should reflect the values of a responsible and compassionate society. While we agree with the Governor that closing the budget gap demands shared sacrifice, we are deeply dismayed by the severe cuts proposed to programs benefiting low-income New Yorkers, including programs for the youth and homeless and child welfare funding." Read more [here](#).

[RJV Inducts New Team of Co-Chairs](#)

As the Steering Committee of Reform Jewish Voice of New York State convened for its annual leadership retreat, Honey Heller and Donald C. Cutler assumed their positions as the new team of co-chairs. Mrs. Heller and Mr. Cutler have set an ambitious legislative agenda for the year that will include marriage equality, reproductive choice, economic justice, good government, and environmental issues around hydrofracturing.

[Reproductive Health Act Reintroduced](#)

On January 25, 2011, Sen. Jeffrey Klein reintroduced the Reproductive Health Act (S. 2524). Sen. Andrea Stewart-Cousins then introduced a similar version of the bill (S. 5808), also titled the Reproductive Health Act, on February 3. Assembly Member Deborah Glick is a chief sponsor of the bill (A. 11484) in Assembly. The proposed legislation protects a woman's right to control her reproductive health in a manner that is best for herself, her family, and her future. The Act ensures a woman's right to an abortion if her health is endangered at any time during her pregnancy. It treats the regulation of abortion as an issue of public health and medical practice, rather than as a

potential crime, removing abortion from the New York State penal code. The Act guarantees everyone the right to use or refuse contraception. Finally, it updates New York State law by codifying constitutional requirements and removing outdated provisions, in order to ensure that women's rights are protected in the future.

[Sen. Thomas Duane to Reintroduce Marriage Equality](#)

Sen. Thomas Duane, the Senate's lead proponent of same-sex marriage rights, has announced he intends to reintroduce marriage equality legislation within weeks and push for a vote by June. In a statement, Sen. Duane insisted, "Everyone is aware that we have to make the lives of New Yorkers better in every way - economically, as well as to provide equality to New York families." While the State Senate remains controlled by the GOP, making the prospects for the bill's passage bleaker, Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos has indicated that he will not prevent the measure from coming up for a vote.

[Steering Committee Seeks Nominees](#)

Are you a passionate advocate in New York? Are you a Jewish professional or a member of a URJ-affiliated congregation? Do you know someone with these qualities? If so, then consider applying to work as a member of the RJV Steering Committee or nominating other potential leaders. Steering Committee volunteers advocate on important issues affecting our state and work as effective voices for Reform Jewish values and social justice. Please send applications to Juliana jschnur@rac.org. Learn more [here](#).

[Governor Andrew M. Cuomo Delivers State of the State](#)

In Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's first State of the State address, he emphasized the critical crossroads facing New York State government ([read his remarks here](#)). As expected, the highest priority on his list is the restoration of fiscal responsibility to the State government, which currently faces a deep budget deficit that Gov. Cuomo measured yesterday at \$10 billion. Among other urgent social justice priorities addressed by Gov. Cuomo are marriage equality, ethics reform and reproductive choice. [Read more here](#).

Social Justice Opportunities in our Communities

Reproductive Rights at Risk: Frame the Issue, Send the Message, Make it Law

Join New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, Medical Director of Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health Dr. Anne Davis and the Once Voice to Save Choice Interfaith Coalition on **Wednesday, March 2, 2011 at 7pm, Congregation Rodeph Sholom at 7 West 83rd Street** in Manhattan for a discussion on how to protect reproductive choice in New York State. Light refreshments will be served. Please RSVP by emailing voicechoice@crsnyc.org or by calling 646.454.3109.

Marriage Equality and Families - Panel Discussion

Temple Sinai of Roslyn (425 Roslyn Road, Roslyn Heights) will host a panel discussion on **Thursday, March 3, 2011 at 7:30pm** about the issue of marriage equality in New York State. This event is hosted by the Gay and Lesbian Inclusion Committees of Temple Sinai of Roslyn and Temple Beth-El of Great Neck as well as Reform Jewish Voice NYS and Empire State Pride Agenda. Light refreshments will be served. RSVP to [Joanna Solmonsohn](mailto:Joanna.Solmonsohn@empirestatepride.org), Long Island Program Organizer for Empire State Pride Agenda, at 516.993.4623.

Are you Hosting a Social Justice Event in New York?

If so, tell us about it! If you're planning to host an event related to the issues on which RJVNYS advocates, let us know a month in advance and we'll help you publicize it. Please send flyers and other information to Juliana at info@rjvnys.org.

Save the Date!

Reform Jewish Voice of New York State & Interfaith Impact of New York State invite you to join them for a

Joint Advocacy Day on May 16, 2011

Spend the day in Albany lobbying your State Senators & Assembly Members on the most pressing social justice issues of today!



We'll give you the tools and the confidence - all you have to do is show up.

As Advocacy Day approaches, please visit our websites for more information:



www.rjvnys.org



www.interfaithimpactnys.org

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