

Connect the Dots: Sharpe Policy in Action

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This entire policy platform represents a vision for a New New York, as envisioned by Larry Sharpe and his Policy Team.

These are the principles on which we based our policy, and what policy resulted from them:

- 1) The design of our policy must move towards more freedom for all people in NY, as New York was rated the worst (#50) in Freedom in the US by The Cato Institute.
- 2) That we would follow a principle of least harm in creating policy solutions for problems facing New York. While we would not pull the rug out from anyone dependent on state services, the policy must move towards the possibility that services could be replaced over time by private and NGO agencies. We needed to recognize that this is a process, and that people would be harmed if we moved too aggressively too quickly.
- 3) That it must cut unnecessary spending and find new revenue streams where we can. Our goal was “no taxes”, but recognized that it would be a long and hard road. Some of the things we were examining were:

a) Places where “help” from the Federal Government cost more than what was given (as Gary Johnson said in 2016, when the State of New Mexico sent money to the Federal Government, it would contribute more money than what came back to the State in aid.) We wanted to avoid these situations, and one of the areas we identified was in Education, where the control that was given in return for the Federal grants was harming New York’s educational system from growing and innovating. “Unfunded Mandates”, in which the strings taking money from the government, or the State itself, in localities needed to be eliminated. At the very least help offered should be “cost neutral”.

This also included places in which policies were affecting other areas, such as the Opioid Crisis, which costs NY State a minimum of \$3.4 billion dollars every year in Medicaid expenses related to overdose treatment costs.

We also looked at and thought an idea from We Do Better (wedobetter.org) of a Community Tax Credit where Non-Profits and NGOs could receive money directly from the taxpayer for the work they do (examples include Planned Parenthood, and even 2nd Amendment organizations that people feel uncomfortable having their tax money being spent on by the State, as well as an idea for “Child Gardens” - which could provide low or no-cost child care for those who need it via direct, consumer driven funding). This is a one-to-one dollar tax credit, and therefore, it’s the people deciding where their “tax money” is spent, rather than bureaucrats and politicians. This model works very well in Arizona, and has been renewed every time it comes up for vote, because the people of AZ and NGOs like it so much. In this case an NGO like Planned Parenthood may do better in states where the people like the work that they do, and Gun Owners of America may do well in areas and states where 2nd Amendment rights are important.

In order to get people looking at who is working and providing in their localities, we split this credit (around \$500 in total) between local/county and statewide charities.

b) Where we had issues such as MTA or Bridges and Tunnels that were crumbling infrastructure, allowing other revenue opportunities to pay for the repairs and upgrades, instead of an already burdened taxpayer; It was not the taxpayer's fault that NY's infrastructure had been so mismanaged, so why should they have to keep paying for it? In these cases, we needed to find worthwhile incentives to convince others to take the responsibility and load. With Bridges, Tunnels, and Roads, that incentive was naming rights, offering sponsors millions in advertising impressions in return for providing the cost of repair, upkeep and maintenance.

With the MTA, it was solving a big problem not just for the companies involved (how to cheaply get their products into NYC), but also solving problems for New York City residents themselves. Our freight shipping idea came from this line of thinking, and long term it would enable NYC and the rest of New York State to be more economically tied to each other in a "One State Project" that would connect rail, subway, shipping, and trucking together. We also had a vision of a hyperloop-type magnetic rail system that could be possible for rapid transit from NYC to other NY cities, like Ithaca, Syracuse, Utica, and Buffalo, and thought of freight as a potential "test balloon" for futuristic long distance mass transit.

The final plan saw great potential in reducing truck congestion, eliminating the problem of slow and inefficient trains, and even getting produce from within the state, lowering food costs in the city.

c) Places in which the current economic trends could be tweaked. This involved:

* Healthcare focusing on patient care, not just insurance reform, including the implementation of a Medicaid program that would put choice back into the hands of Medicaid recipients by using a Health Care Debit Account (with a fallback to traditional Medicaid when money is spent), and also an avenue for using Direct Primary Care, which saves millions by making choices in health care consumer-driven rather than driven by insurance companies and health and hospital conglomerates. We insisted in making all pricing transparent, so people would know how much their health care costs, and big health business could not collude and drive prices up behind closed doors.

* Small business taxes and regulations that strangled the small business owner, leaving small businesses unable to compete, with the big businesses who had enough money to work within the system of unreasonable regulation and economic expectations. Also ways to stimulate economic growth including legal cannabis, and opportunities for cryptocurrency and blockchain businesses. This meant relaxing onerous regulation, taking a good look at occupational licensing and seeing other ways we could facilitate business to grow in New York.

4) That we would attack things that we saw as injustices that New Yorkers faced. These were in the areas of:

a) Criminal Justice Reform, including bail (we mandate a minimum of four options and

offer alternatives to cash bail, including electronic supervision, and the ability to use a credit or debit card with pin at the point of arraignment)

b) Family Court Reforms that encourage gender neutral outcomes, discourage gamesmanship between parents, and preserve the role of each parent in a child's life, as well as making adoption easier.

c) The SAFE act which infringed on Constitutionally guaranteed rights. In New York, a loaded weapon can be defined as an unloaded weapon and unsecured ammunition in the same room; This makes "violent felons" of average citizens who travel through New York. Two gun owners traveling through JFK in New York, returning home from safari, were convicted of SAFE Act felonies even though they were fully compliant with Federal TSA law.

d) Drug Policy which saves lives, saves money, and enables alternatives to pain management using opioids. The team recognized the fact that opioids are still a valid treatment option, but wanted to also recognize that cannabis and kratom are also valid alternatives to those who do not experience the type of intractable chronic pain that opioids are indicated for. Treating "drug addiction" as a public health issue instead of a criminal justice issue became a common theme for us, as there was a compassionate aim in our policy of making life better for all New Yorkers. We also decided that the Drug Policy community's preference for Overdose Prevention Sites is smart, and good policy, and that it would not be "enabling drug use", but instead enable us to save the aforementioned \$3.4b in overdose-related costs, and keep people alive long enough to seek treatment for their health issues related to addiction or opioid dependence.

We took a stand on full clemency for those convicted of what we see as victimless crimes. Most of these crimes fell within the area of drug use and possession, but also sex work.

e) Eminent Domain in Utica became a big issue for us as well, with a hospital conglomerate getting the State to take people's private land from them on corporate behalf. Besides the Eminent Domain issue, our Health Care Reform focuses on reducing the power of such conglomerates, so we had an issue we doubly opposed, and it gave us motivation to take a stand, and loudly oppose the forceful taking of private property by such companies. Especially, since in our opinion, Utica was better served by multiple hospitals.

f) Issues within Prisons and Jails faced by prisoners and Corrections Officers, aiming for a compassionate view towards both. The fact that COs have a much shorter life expectancy than other public service professions outlines our need to not take an "us vs. them" point of view in this area. A stand on conditions for all parties was needed, and that led to the idea of using Lexington County, MA's "HUMV" program that is a specialized housing and counseling for Veterans in jail, that has a 5% recidivism rate as a model. It is "kinder" and "gentler", yet has the effect of preparing people to re-enter society after paying their debt and being sequestered. We envisioned this being used for other populations beside Veterans with special needs and circumstances, namely drug-using populations, LGBTQ+ prisoners, and young adults (18-25) being potential targets to develop these programs. We took a stand on the fact that NYSCOPBA has not had a contract with the State, and that conditions for Corrections Officers have been bad for some time now. We advocated for more training that would be useful for Corrections Officers on the job, and also outside the specific prison and jail setting.

5) Attacking multi-domain problems such as education/funding, the energy crisis, and the environment.

a) Education included extremely high property taxes as funding, with a lot of waste, driving the cost to educate NY children to be about \$22,000 annually per child. Not to mention the issue of credential inflation, student debt, and a looming crisis of not having enough tradespeople to accommodate our needs in the future. This led us to looking towards the European model of education for solutions.

We saw several things where we could improve, leading to the discussion of divorcing ourselves from the Federal Government in everything but Special Education and Anti-Discrimination laws, and instituting a K-10 program based on each student's needs with the last two years of schooling being an option between:

- * college prep track (current model)
- * trade school (for both traditional "blue-collar" fields such as plumbing, carpentry and electrical work or technology-related trades such as systems or network administration)
- * going to two years of college for an associates degree, for those who are academically inclined.
- * going directly into the workforce, in which they will be given the option to take any of the other options within 10 years of leaving 10th grade at 16. This is modeled off the very successful GI Bill.

b) For energy issues, we looked to ways in the short term to provide NY's energy needs while switching over in the long term to more sustainable models. New York's zoning laws allow local municipalities and counties to regulate oil and gas development. Fracking for natural gas and oil should be enabled where communities are comfortable with this fact, which would also increase economic growth in areas with these resources. And we have recently learned that there is a heating oil crisis looming due to a major explosion occurring at the Canadian refinery which was the sole provider of this oil. We looked towards solutions like allowing a terminal on hard-hit Long Island for distribution of liquefied natural gas (LNG), which would allow more heating systems to convert from heating oil to natural gas. We also looked to remedy a building crisis in heating oil prices by "fluffing" the barrel by mixing in road diesel to the heating oil supply to make it go farther.

In the meantime, keeping with wind and solar conversion where the geography would allow would be good, including offshore wind and solar options. In the long term, we looked at safer Generation IV nuclear reactors (MSRs) as an option, and ways to stimulate research into them in order to increase NY's self reliance for energy in the future.

c) Environment must be balanced with the economic well-being of our state, to that end we proposed that the NYSDEC be given an extra mandate, to balance the economy with the environment, and that we also need to look at modern solutions for cleanup, such as bioremediation. We also wanted to make sure companies are held accountable for environmental crimes, and that the Attorney General's office was given expertise to prosecute these cases with an office of engineers and scientists whose job it is to help the AG prepare environmental cases. We wanted to make it clear that the free reign on destroying NY's environment is over. We also wanted to give guidance and push legislation that would require penalties to take into account the community and harm done to people first in awards, after cleanup costs.

In many ways our policy represents the type of out-of-the-box thinking that happens when you confine yourself in a box. Some of it may seem counter-intuitive, but a team of experts in all manner of industries and policy put time into generating ideas that would lower or eliminate different burdens in NY to build healthier, happier communities and would make

NY the best state in our nation in personal and economic freedoms.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the team for their extremely hard work on different planks within our coherent platform.

Economic Team was led by Michael Burns, and included experts such as Dr. Kyle Varner (health care), Tarnell Brown (economics and education policy), Dan Johnson (Community Tax Credit), former Peekskill Council member William Schmidt, and Mary Swim.

Infrastructure Team was led by Russ Clark, and included George Carpenter (Farming).

Social and Legal Team was led by myself, and was joined by several legal experts.

The entire Policy team would like to thank our candidate, Larry Sharpe, Campaign Managers Brian Waddell and Kari Bittner, and our Communications, Field, and Social Media Teams led by Trishanda Barhorst, Lauren McKinnon, Tucker Coburn, and Zach McClanahan for helping us get our vision for a New New York to all of your eyes, ears, and hearts.

In Liberty,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background. The signature is cursive and appears to read "Siobhan".

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