NYS Millionaires Urge State Leaders to Raise Their Taxes
To Meet the Needs of All New Yorkers

Letter: http://www.responsiblewealth.org/nys_letter

(Albany, NY) Today 34 top-tier taxpayers statewide asked Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature to implement new taxes targeting wealthy New Yorkers. The letter calls on state leadership to use tax reform to help meet urgent budget needs of the Empire State.

The letter, signed by filmmaker and philanthropist Abigail Disney, former AT&T Broadband CEO Leo Hindery, Jr., retired Blackrock Managing Director Morris Pearl and others, calls for three new taxes:

1. A strengthened millionaire’s tax, with a new marginal rate of 9.62% on income over $1 million, and new income brackets starting at $5 million (10.32% marginal rate), $10 million (11.32%) and $100 million (11.82%), which would bring in an estimated $4.5 billion per year;
2. A modest “mark-to-market” annual tax on net assets, applied to households with over $1 billion in assets;
3. A pied-à-terre tax on unoccupied 2nd, 3rd and 4th residential properties valued at $5 million or more.

The letter states:

“New York is a wealthy state with a growing economy and solid economic indicators. However, New York leads the nation in income inequality and has many significant unmet needs – in education, health care, housing, human services, infrastructure, the environment and more.... As business leaders and investors, we know that to have a broadly shared, robust economic future, the State of New York needs to invest in the education, health and welfare of its citizens, and invest in the technology and infrastructure on which a strong economy depends. As top-tier taxpayers, we can and should be asked to do more to contribute to a more equitable state tax structure.”

While the state’s economic indicators were strong in 2019, there were fears of a recession and the beginning of the 2020 state legislative session was overshadowed by a budget gap estimated in the billions. Now with Covid-19, the threat of increased costs to the state should prompt a full discussion of how equalizing our state’s tax system can help us meet the needs of all New Yorkers.

The letter was organized by the Responsible Wealth project, a project of the non-profit United for a Fair Economy, in partnership with Patriotic Millionaires and the Fiscal Policy Institute in Albany. Full text is available at http://www.responsiblewealth.org/nys_letter.

Abigail Disney, award-winning producer and director of documentary films, a philanthropist, and a member of Responsible Wealth:

“If my taxes go up by a few thousand dollars, even tens of thousands, it won't affect my standard of living in the least. But if all of us in the top 1% are asked to pay our fair share, it means New York will be able to meet the needs of millions of New Yorkers who don’t have a little extra to give. I would be overjoyed to pay a higher tax rate to help our state provide resources and opportunities for all our citizens.”

Leo Hindery, Jr., formerly CEO of AT&T Broadband and of the YES Network:

"As a businessman in and proud resident of New York, I have benefitted tremendously from the public investments made by our State over many decades and generations. Without New York’s infrastructure and its public education system, I would not have been able to build the companies I’ve been fortunate to create and nurture in New York. I
signed this letter because I believe New York citizens with high incomes and wealth should be contributing more than we are currently are in order to help create future opportunities and a prosperous economy for the whole of our State.”

Morris Pearl, Chairperson of the Patriotic Millionaires and retired BlackRock Managing Director:
“New York is an amazing place to live, work, and start a business because of services funded by our tax dollars. If we want our state to continue being a national leader, we need to continue investing in our people and our communities, and that requires higher taxes for wealthy New Yorkers. There’s no reason that millionaire investors who have profited the most from our state’s success should have lower tax rates than regular New Yorkers who have to work for a living.”

Ron Deutsch, Executive Director, Fiscal Policy Institute:
“Our taxes fuel our communities. We rely on schools, social services, transportation and infrastructure, but without taxes to support them, they disappear. Tax reform means everyone pitches in to do their part to make New York a great place to live, work, and raise a family. Now, more than ever, we need to ask the wealthy to pay a little more during this health crisis.”

Responsible Wealth, a project of the non-profit United for a Fair Economy, is a national network of business leaders, investors and inheritors who use their surprising voice to speak out – in Congress, in statehouses, in the media and in corporate boardrooms – for progressive taxes, living wages and corporate accountability.

The Fiscal Policy Institute is a nonpartisan, nonprofit research and education organization committed to improving public policies and private practices to better the economic and social conditions of all.

The Patriotic Millionaires are high net worth Americans, business leaders, and investors who are united in their concern about the destabilizing concentration of wealth and power in America. The mission of our organization is to build a more stable, prosperous, and inclusive nation by promoting public policies around the following three principles: equal political representation, a livable minimum wage, and a fair tax system.

###