

# **A Plan for Change**

*Specific New Ideas for Our Future*

**JOE MESI**

FOR STATE SENATE

No one will fight harder for Western New York

**Inside:** Read about Joe Mesi's plans for change

*To create new jobs and keep existing ones*



*For demanding quality in our children's education*

*For helping families reduce the burden of rising property taxes and energy prices*



Dear Friend:

New York is facing great challenges. We need bold ideas for change that are equal to the problems we face. **We need change** – change that starts with believing in our future.

Believing that if we **invest in our university and our community colleges**, then we'll create jobs so young people don't move away.

Believing that we **can cut property taxes** for working and middle-class families and seniors.

Believing that that **we can have a government that works for regular people** – not the lobbyists and special interests.

A lot of people talk about change. Even my opponent is talking about change – which is ironic given that he's been in office for 20 years. So I feel an obligation to talk about some very specific ideas I have for our future.

You deserve real substance, not just sound bites. By describing my detailed plans, I hope my *Plan for Change* will allow you to make an educated decision on Election Day.

My *Plan for Change* includes my proposals for:

- ***Creating New Jobs and Keeping Existing Ones:*** My first priority is jobs. I believe that if we invest in our university and our community colleges, then we'll create jobs so young people don't move away.
- ***Middle-Class Property Tax Relief:*** It's no longer enough to say we will cap or restrain the growth of property taxes. The burden is so high that they must be reduced. That's my plan.

- ***Targeted Investments in Higher Education:*** We need to target investments to build on our strengths. The science advances at UB and the bioinformatics and cancer research taking place at Roswell Park should help attract the kind of high-tech jobs that will keep our kids here—and give them a real future.
- ***Creating the New Energy Economy Here in WNY:*** Our economic future depends on two things we can do at the same time: Ending our dependence on foreign oil and creating new industries here in Western New York whose jobs can't be outsourced. Turning that vision into reality is the kind of change we need.
- ***Real Reform in Albany:*** We deserve and should demand more from our elected officials. I believe that politics should be like every other job. You shouldn't get a raise until you've delivered results.

I hope you will read my plan. You might not agree with every detail, but you deserve to know where I stand. When you're done, I want to hear your ideas, suggestions, and thoughts. Please call me at (716) 625-9013 or email me at [joe@votejoemesi.com](mailto:joe@votejoemesi.com).

We need new leadership in Albany that believes in us as much as we believe in ourselves. New leadership that won't give up. That won't say cut – with a sledgehammer. But instead say use a scalpel, and at the same time – invest in our strengths – and believe in our future.

Together, you and I – if we believe – are going to change New York.

Yours sincerely,



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*“Joe Mesi is just the kind of leader Albany needs – independent, hard-working, and unafraid to take on our toughest challenges. Joe has been a great community advocate, and I know he will put everything he has into building a better future for Western New Yorkers. From tax relief and affordable health care to jobs creation and reform, Joe will bring new energy and real change to Albany, and that is why I’m supporting his candidacy for the New York State Senate.”*

– Governor David A. Paterson

*“Joe Mesi has earned the respect and trust of the voters of Western New York because of his unbelievable work ethic and his commitment to better his community. I know that once elected, there will be no better advocate for the families and needs of the 61<sup>st</sup> District than Joe Mesi. I fully support him in this campaign and urge you to vote for Joe on November 4<sup>th</sup>.”*

– U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton

## JOE MESI'S FIRST PRIORITY: GOOD JOBS FOR A CHANGE

*“The way to create jobs here is by targeting investments that build on our strengths—like the science program at UB and cancer research taking place at Roswell Park. Between UB and Roswell Park, there’s a nucleus to create high-tech jobs here that Albany hasn’t begun to tap. As your State Senator, I will.”*

– Joe Mesi

Two hundred thousand people have left our community since 1970. That’s why creating good new jobs and protecting existing jobs is Joe Mesi’s first priority. He has outlined a comprehensive five-point plan that builds on our community’s strengths. No one will fight harder for jobs than Joe Mesi.

### JOE MESI’S JOBS PLAN

<b>Target investments to build on our strengths</b>	The science advances at UB and the bioinformatics and cancer research taking place at Roswell Park can help attract the kind of high-tech jobs that will keep our kids here—and give them a real future. In the Senate, Joe Mesi will fight to increase funding for our universities.
<b>Reform Empire Zones and Industrial Development Agencies</b>	These programs provide breaks to corporations that promise to create jobs. But too often, they end up subsidizing businesses that are cutting jobs, not creating them. That’s got to change. We have to hold corporations accountable and make sure they keep their promises, so our kids can

**Lower  
Property  
Taxes**

stay here and find good jobs to support their families.

High tax rates put us at a competitive disadvantage and discourage businesses from locating here. (*See Joe Mesi's Middle-Class Property Tax Relief Plan below.*)

**End Tax  
Breaks for  
Corporations  
that Move  
Our Jobs Out  
of State.**

In just the past year, the Republican-led Senate defeated an anti-outsourcing bill. There's no excuse for Albany helping CEOs outsource our jobs—with *our* tax dollars, leaving New York families holding the bill. It should be Albany's job to protect our jobs.

**Grow Green  
Industries.**

Western New York should be a model in growing "green industries." Mesi's plan will cut energy costs, create jobs in growing economic sectors, and curbing global warming by investing in renewable energy and training the next generation of workers.

*"Mesi's plan will help businesses maintain and create jobs giving the regional economy a much needed boost. That's what we need right now – a leader who won't be afraid to fight for change and take on our toughest challenges."*

– Sam Williams, United Auto Workers

*"As a business owner I support Joe Mesi's plan for good jobs because it covers all the bases. He has a concrete plan to help families, the workers, and business owners. We need change and Joe Mesi will fight for it."*

– Orazio Gervasi, owner of Amici restaurant (Kenmore, NY)

## MIDDLE CLASS PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

*"I am proposing a comprehensive solution to sky-high property taxes – one that is both feasible and provides real relief to our families. Our working families need tax relief, not just a limit on how much our taxes are raised."*

*– Joe Mesi*



Joe Mesi is the only candidate with a realistic plan for actually reducing property taxes for working class families:

### JOE MESI'S MIDDLE-CLASS PROPERTY TAX RELIEF PLAN

#### **Lower Tax Bills with a "Circuit Breaker"**

We can provide the average person in New York State with over \$700 in property tax relief if we enact a "circuit breaker." The circuit breaker lowers property taxes by setting a ceiling on how much of a household's income can go to property taxes. Any property tax payment by a household above that limit is rebated.

#### **Ban unfunded mandates.**

We need to impose strict limits on the mandates that are handed down by Albany and left for our local governments to deal with – and then leave local taxpayers holding the bill. Joe Mesi will ban unfunded mandates.

#### **Fair taxes for farmers**

Farmers in WNY are disproportionately taxed. Joe Mesi will expand STAR to give

**“Do more with less” spending reduction initiative**

them relief, and include equipment purchases in the income they report so they are not penalized for hard work.

Albany must “Do More With Less” to pay for the tax cuts program, which will save taxpayers several billion dollars. To pay for middle-class property tax relief, we must stop funding programs that do nothing for our families and only benefit a couple CEOs in New York City:

- Medicaid reform (\$750 million-\$1.5 billion in savings—for more information, see Joe Mesi’s Health Care Plan below)
- Save hundreds of millions by bulk purchasing of prescription drugs (\$200 million in savings)
- Close corporate tax loopholes (\$30 million in savings)
- Empire Zone Reform (\$200 million in savings): Impose a simple and ironclad job creation requirement; right now over \$200 million in Empire Zone benefits go to companies that either did not create jobs or actually cut jobs.

*“Businesses are collapsing under the burden of high taxes. We support Joe Mesi’s plan for lower property taxes because he knows what we need --- real relief, not empty promises or bogus plans. We’re glad Joe Mesi has consulted with us about his plan to finally lower taxes for working families and businesses.”*

*– Colleen DiPirro, President, Amherst Chamber of Commerce*

## HIGHER EDUCATION: FOR OUR FUTURE

*“If I’m elected, I will make sure our schools and universities are protected and cultivated. As a local college graduate myself, I know how valuable our schools are. Depriving the engine of opportunity of the fuel it needs is exactly the opposite of the change we need.”*

– Joe Mesi

Joe Mesi is the only candidate to offer a comprehensive plan for investing in higher education. From tuition assistance to funding for our universities and research centers, the old guard has let Western New York down. We need change and we need to new leadership to get it.

### JOE MESI’S MIDDLE-CLASS PROPERTY TAX RELIEF PLAN

#### **Tuition relief for students and families**

Joe Mesi’s “Do More with Less” budget plan (see above) will let us increase tuition assistance for working and middle-class families.

Mesi rejects the across-the-board budget cuts proposed by Republican Senate candidates that threaten to steal our future.

#### **Investing in our strengths**

If we want to grow our economy, one of the best ways to do it is invest in our colleges. Every \$1 million spent on research and development at UB generates 29 jobs in Western New York.

The Bioinformatics center at UB, which works in close collaboration with Roswell

Park Cancer Institute and the Hauptman-Woodward Medical Research Institute, has turned its \$11 million initial operational research investment into \$55 million in new grants within the past five years. These are models of success, and we need to provide these centers of education with as many resources as possible, so that we can provide more for our young people and create more jobs.

**Supporting  
alternative  
energy  
research at  
UB**

Green jobs that can't be outsourced are our future. Western New York can become a model in growing "green industries" – and that starts with supporting alternative energy innovations incubated at UB.

**Ensuring the  
success of  
UB 2020**

Joe Mesi believes UB 2020 - the vision for a top-flight research university and economic engine in our backyard - is critical to our region's economic future. UB produces a 5-to-1 return on investment for every dollar of state support it receives. The state should be investing more, not less, to enhance UB's role as a catalyst for the regional economy.

**Connecting  
community  
colleges to  
local  
businesses**

Joe Mesi will work to connect our local two-year colleges to WNY businesses – to ensure young people can acquire the skills that employers are looking for.

## BUILDING THE NEW ENERGY ECONOMY IN WNY

*“ I will encourage creative energy solutions to help Western New York become a leader in the field of alternate energy. Together we can preserve our great lakes and our environment. At the same time, we can promote economic development by ensuring Western New York is on the cutting edge of technology.”*

*– Joe Mesi*

As the cost of gas bounces around \$4 per gallon and electric bills continue to skyrocket, we must look towards alternate energy sources. Joe Mesi has proposed a bold plan for alternative energy development and economic development.

### JOE MESI’S ENERGY PLAN

#### **Invest in local wind energy**

Steel Winds wind farm on the site of the old Bethlehem steel plant serves as an innovative energy success story. These windmills sit on a Brownfield that otherwise would go unused. Currently the site produces enough clean energy to serve 6,000 New York homes. Joe Mesi will bring more windmills to the site and reproduce similar projects in other areas of Erie and Genesee County.

These windmills can bring in needed funds to our towns and in turn will lower our taxes. Not only are they good for our budget, they are also good for our environment and they put money back into our local economy.

**Tax oil company profits to reduce our gas prices**

Joe Mesi thinks it's unacceptable that big oil companies are making billions of dollars while New Yorkers are paying outrageous prices at the gas pump. That's why Mesi supports taxing oil companies' windfall profits and using the money to permanently reduce the state gas tax.

**Training for green jobs**

A push to dramatically increase our clean-energy supply will mean increased demand for workers in these and many other areas, and rising demand could also lead to rising wages. To ensure a qualified workforce we must take the concrete steps like creating a Green Collar Education Advisory Council, made up of academics and professionals, and coordinating vocational /technical/trade education, Workforce Development and Higher Education policies to develop training and education tracks in each high-payoff green jobs area, with curriculum closely tracked to local job and R& D opportunities.

**Support home weatherization**

We can save heating dollars through weatherizing homes for optimum energy efficiency by using funds from the System Benefit Charge (a universal charge on utility bills) and the regional carbon capping initiative. Weatherization includes energy-efficient windows, doors, insulation, heating and cooling systems.

## CHANGING ALBANY: A REFORM AGENDA

*“Too often the politicians in Albany do not speak up for the people they represent. Partisan bickering has caused gridlock and as a result we stand at a crossroads. We need to send a strong message to Albany that we will no longer accept the status quo. We deserve and should demand more from our elected officials.”*

– Joe Mesi

Joe Mesi knows that we can't change the players. We have to change the rules of the game.

### JOE MESI'S REFORM PLAN

**No results?  
No raises.**

While Western New Yorkers struggle to find and keep jobs in tough times, legislators in Albany are trying to increase their own pay. Joe Mesi believes that politics should be like every other job: you shouldn't get a raise until you've delivered results.

**Ban unfunded mandates**

We need strict limits on the mandates that are handed down from Albany and left for local governments to deal with – leaving local taxpayers holding the bill. Joe Mesi will ban unfunded mandates.

**Ethics reform**

Joe Mesi will strengthen the ban on personal use of campaign contributions, restrict contributions from lobbyists and those receiving government contracts and require complete financial disclosure.

## STANDING UP FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

*“Jobs are my first priority, and we can’t protect existing jobs and create new ones without standing up for small businesses.”*

*– Joe Mesi*

Small businesses are an essential part of the fabric of our communities. They represent Western New York values – independence, entrepreneurship, hard work and employing almost half a million people in our region. It’s time somebody stood up for them instead of the big corporations.

### JOE MESI’S SMALL BUSINESS PLAN

**Lowering property taxes for working and middle-class families**

High tax rates put us at a competitive disadvantage and discourage businesses from locating here. (*See Joe Mesi’s Middle-Class Property Tax Relief Plan above.*)

**Ending subsidies for businesses that outsource jobs out of New York**

Today, big corporations and their lobbyists capture special subsidies and tax breaks that aren’t offered to small businesses. Joe Mesi will end that game by banning “corporate welfare” for companies that ship jobs out of New York.

**Connecting small employers to community colleges**

Joe Mesi will work to connect our local two-year colleges to WNY businesses – to ensure that small business can hire young people with the skills they need.

## QUALITY AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE

*“Our health care system is broken. It costs too much and the HMOs and insurance companies have too much power.”*

*– Joe Mesi*

The fact that so many New Yorkers cannot afford the cost of healthcare forces people to delay treatment and creates even more costly health hazards. We can and must bring down public and private health care costs while improving quality by moving towards universal health coverage that emphasizes primary and preventive care.

### JOE MESI’S HEALTH CARE PLAN

#### **Reduce costs**

The State Republicans deregulated HMOs (the same way the Bush administration deregulated the financial industry). The result has been a catastrophic increase in costs. Joe Mesi will restore regulation of HMOs to lower costs and preserve patient choice.

#### **Improve quality**

We can improve health care quality by increasing access to primary and preventive health care—keeping new Yorkers away from the single most expensive case to get care: the emergency room.

Closing health care clinics was the worst decision Erie County could have made. It’s time to believe in our future again.

**Expand EPIC for seniors and buy Rx drugs in bulk**

Joe Mesi will fight to expand the EPIC program so that more seniors can benefit from cheaper prescriptions. Mesi also supports a bulk prescription drugs program so that we can save hundreds of millions of dollars for taxpayers.

**Reform Medicaid**

Medicaid is the single biggest cost for state and local governments in New York. Joe Mesi has a comprehensive plan to reform Medicaid:

- Increase disease management to improve health and reduce costs for low-income New Yorkers living with diabetes, high blood pressure, HIV/AIDS and other chronic conditions
- Reduce reliance on expensive inpatient hospital procedures and increase primary and preventive care
- Reduce reliance on high-cost nursing homes and increase independent living options for people with disabilities
- Maximize use of generic medications and expand preferred drug list to more high-cost medications
- Equalize treatment of HMOs with other insurance companies and close assessment loopholes

## EDUCATION FOR OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

*“Ensuring the education of the next generation is a solemn responsibility. Our parents sacrificed and invest in us. We have the same obligation to our children. Government’s job is to offer quality education in a sustainable way.”*

*– Joe Mesi*

### JOE MESI’S EDUCATION PLAN

#### **Demand Quality**

We pay a lot in property taxes for our children’s education – in part because it’s our most important investment – in our future. And so we have both the right and the obligation to demand that our children are receiving the best possible. That means training for teachers, proper supplies and money going directly into the classroom.

#### **End unfunded and unnecessary mandates**

There’s a mandate that a bus seat is provided for every child in a school district. Does it matter if the child walks to school, or carpools, or gets a ride from his parents? No. Taxpayers are still paying for that bus seat. Joe Mesi will end unnecessary, unfunded mandates.

#### **Healthy, Efficient Schools:**

Green schools cost about the same as conventional schools –but provide financial benefits that are 20 times as large. They provide an extraordinarily cost-effective way to enhance student learning, reduce health care and operational costs and, increase school quality.

## RESPECT AND DIGNITY FOR OUR SENIORS

*“Our parents did everything for us. We owe older Americans enormous respect and the right to live their lives with dignity. Those are the principles are sacred.”*  
– Joe Mesri



### JOE MESI’S PLAN FOR SENIORS

#### **Property Tax Fairness**

It’s not fair to ask seniors on a fixed income to pay property taxes that eat up their savings. Joe Mesri supports a “circuit breaker” plan that would guarantee no senior would pay more than they can afford based on their income. (*For more information, see Joe Mesri’s Middle-Class Property Tax Relief Plan above.*)

#### **Expand eligibility for EPIC prescription drug savings**

Joe Mesri will fight to expand the EPIC program so that more seniors can benefit from cheaper prescriptions. Mesri also supports a bulk prescription drugs program so that we can save hundreds of millions of dollars for taxpayers.

#### **Health Care at Home**

We must expand access to home and community-based health care to support independent living. Nursing homes should be a last resort, not an easy answer.

## ABOUT JOE MESI

**FOR JOE MESI, WESTERN NEW YORK HAS ALWAYS BEEN HOME.** He grew up in Tonawanda, went to local schools, and graduated from college here. And 15 years ago, he began his successful boxing career here—and lived and trained all the way through. People told him he couldn't make it staying here. But with incredible support from the people of Western New York, he proved all the doubters wrong.

**HE'S GIVING BACK TO A COMMUNITY THAT'S GIVEN HIM SO MUCH.** Joe started his own small business here 11 years ago. He's been giving back to the community even longer. Driven by his cousin's long wait for a kidney transplant, Joe created a foundation to draw attention to the urgent need for organ donors. He's helped dozens of community groups and local charities over the years. But what Joe finds most rewarding is going into our schools, encouraging teens to work hard and realize their dreams.

**NOW JOE IS RUNNING FOR STATE SENATE TO SHAKE THINGS UP IN ALBANY** and get Western New York back on track. *Plan for Change* is Joe's detailed blueprint to revive our economy, create new jobs, end wasteful spending and help struggling middle class families with real tax relief. He believes with every thing he has that new energy and new ideas in Albany really *can* turn things around in Western New York—and build a brighter future for all of us who call it home.

**JOE MESI**  
FOR STATE SENATE

No one will fight harder for Western New York.