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Quinn Touts Job Revival in State of the City

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NEW YORK—Job creation was the main theme at City Council Speaker Christine Quinn's State of the City address on Wednesday.

"We can't afford to wait for more sunny days to continue strengthening the foundations of our economy," she said. "There's work we can do right now so that when the storm passes and the economy recovers, New York will be at the forefront of that recovery."

She outlined a four-point program in her speech. In chronological order, she said the most important thing to do is "cultivate an economy of innovation," boost small business growth, reform taxes so businesses can create employment opportunities, and ensure opportunities to learn new job skills.

The "economy of innovation" she referred to means creating more technology jobs in the city. The speaker says that New York has lagged behind in the creation of tech start-up firms.

She added that New York also lagged behind in the creation of green-tech jobs, whereas the rest of the nation saw a 9 percent increase in the past decade. The speaker also said there would be more support for clean energy businesses in the future.

The next point she outlined calls for the protection of small businesses by updating the city's inspection process to make it more fair for the owners. Also, she aims to free up avenues for small businesses to get financing.

Around half of the jobs in New York City are in small businesses, the speaker said, adding that the city will give out tax credits to help the owners save money. She added that 19,000 small businesses are eligible to get the credit and can save them as much as \$3,400 yearly.

"Consider this a targeted first step, and as our fiscal situation improves we'll begin to extend this tax credit to other types of small businesses," she said.

The final point that she said will help the city is to push GED (general equivalency diploma) testing system among high school dropouts. She said that only 48 percent of New Yorkers who take the GED test have passed it.