

## 2012 NY Legislature Candidate Survey on Transportation

**Candidate Name:** George S. Latimer

**District:** NYS Senate, 37th District

**Party:** D, WF

**Q: Roads, bridges, and transit systems are in a state of disrepair across the state. Would you support finding new revenues to help maintain and repair our existing road and bridge infrastructure and invest in our transit systems? If so, please suggest ideas.**

A: We need to reevaluate the way we approach infrastructure finance. In these difficult economic times, we as legislators must be both diligent and creative in protecting and using taxpayer dollars. For example, we should be looking to innovative federal funding sources like the TIFIA program, which will hopefully help finance much of the Tappan Zee Bridge - a project that has the potential to ensure the region's competitiveness for years to come and one that I wholeheartedly support. We should also look to public-private partnerships to look for innovative ways to pay for transit, road and bridge projects. Streamlining our procurement practices with tools like Design-Build will both speed up projects and make them less expensive, which is one of the reasons I proudly supported Governor Cuomo's special legislation last year. (Chapter 56 of Laws of 2011) And as a state legislator it is my duty to make smart decisions when it comes to the budget, and dedicate funds where they are most needed. We need to prioritize projects that are the most needed and -- especially in this economy -- will create the most jobs, and we need to make sure that we are protecting working families' hard-earned money. This includes eliminating redundant administrative positions in entities like the MTA where there are three agencies consolidated into one entity, using government IT workers to fix problems rather than spending more on outside consultants, and expanding programs like the Gates approval process to filter out projects that may not yet be fully shovel-ready. Only where these other avenues have failed should we consider placing more of a burden on New Yorkers through fare or toll hikes. That must be a last resort.

**Q: The FYE 2013 New York State budget distributed the "long lines tax" according to population which helped support operations for over 130 transit providers across the state and provided an additional \$29.6 million for non-MTA transit systems. Do you believe this tax should be permanently redistributed across the state?**

Yes

No

**Q: Few projects symbolize the state's funding challenges better than the replacement of the Tappan Zee Bridge, the development of the I-287 corridor, and the struggle over whether or not to include transit in the project. Do you support finding ways to improve bus service in the corridor?**

Yes

No

**Q: There have been three MTA fare hikes since 2007, and another is slated for 2013. During this period, many subway and bus lines were reduced. The State contributes about 40% of the MTA's revenue through dedicated taxes, but those taxes will not generate enough revenue for the agency in 2013. Would you support a proposal for new transit funding to relieve strain on the farebox or do you think fares should be raised?**

*I support a proposal for new transit funding.*

*I support a fare hike.*

*I support a mix of new revenues and higher fares and tolls.*

**Q: Do you support the repeal of the Payroll Mobility Tax, which generates \$1.3 billion in revenues for the MTA? If you support repealing the tax, how would you address the ensuing budget gap?**

A: Yes. While I voted for the Payroll Mobility Tax, I voted for it as an emergency measure. I believe all of the interested parties should come together around the table to discuss how to better fund the MTA, including the potential use of tolls on East River bridges, aspects of congestion pricing, and a more equitable cost versus service level methodology, taking into account the fact that certain communities are served by 24 hour service, while those who ride the Metro-North are not. Another factor to bear in mind is the impact that the overall economy - particularly the real estate market - had on the MTA's operating budget. The Payroll Tax was largely implemented to counteract the effects of the housing bubble bursting, which dramatically reduced MTA revenues. If we are successful in bringing people back to New York and stirring new investment, the MTA's revenues will improve without having to increase any taxes on commuters or businesses.

**Q: The new federal transportation law, MAP-21, consolidated a number of programs that pay for projects to make biking and walking safer into the new Transportation Alternatives fund. The law also gives states the authority to transfer up to 50% of this funding to other transportation projects, such as roads and bridges. Do you think the state should transfer 50% of the money in this fund to pay for roads and bridges, or keep it in the fund to pay for biking and walking infrastructure?**

A: I believe the state should keep the funds for biking and walking infrastructure

**Q: Across the country, red light and speeding camera enforcement technologies have been used to help police control driver behavior. Authorization for using these cameras in our communities is up to Albany legislators. Do you support the use of red light cameras? Do you support the use of speed cameras?**

*I support the use of red light cameras.*

*I support the use of speed cameras.*

*I support the use of both red light and speed cameras.*

*I do not support the use of red light or speed cameras.*