



For Immediate Release

CONTACT:

- Mary McClelland - Assemblymember Harry B. Bronson: (585) 851-1011 | mcclellandm@nyassembly.gov
- Valerie Best - Senator James Skoufis: (347) 861-4754 | ybest@nysenate.gov

Senator James Skoufis, Assemblymember Harry Bronson with Support from The Business Council of New York State and New York State Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus Fight for 'Work Opportunity Tax Credit' to Address Workforce Shortages and Increase Equity in New York's Economy

February 4, 2025 – Today Senator James Skoufis (SD42) and Assemblymember Harry Bronson (AD138) held a press conference in Albany to fight for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (“WOTC”) to be included in the FY ‘26 state budget.

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (S2429/A4012) will create a \$90 million dollar investment over three-years to increase participation in New York’s workforce, countering both the employment shortages affecting businesses and addressing anti-poverty in some of New York’s most marginalized populations.

The legislation has broad support from the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus, the Business Council of New York, regional Chambers of Commerce, organized labor, the NAACP, and veterans’ and social service agencies - all of which point to WOTC as a meaningful strategy for reducing barriers to employment. Today’s press conference also included speakers from New York State Industries for the Disabled, Inc. (NYSID), AFL-CIO’s Capital District Area Labor Federation (CDALF), and New York business owners.

“The federal work opportunity tax credit has proven its effectiveness at employing hard to reach segments of society,” **said Senator Skoufis**. “Despite my skeptical eye when it comes to tax incentives, individuals from historically marginalized or disenfranchised

groups have an opportunity for better employment because of this program, and employers have the opportunity to hire a diverse workforce with a myriad of experiences and skills - both vital benefits in today's world. At a moment when there are so many federal programs at risk, now is the time to introduce a state credit and ensure New Yorkers of all stripes can get to work. I'm proud to sponsor this bill once again alongside Assemblymember Bronson and I look forward to seeing this get done.”

“We know that a good job with benefits is the most important tool for lifting people and families out of poverty. We also know that our business community is seeking qualified workers to address historic workforce shortages. Including the Work Opportunity Tax Credit in the budget is a collaborative solution to building an inclusive, diverse economy and stronger, more prosperous New York,” **said Assemblymember Harry Bronson, Chair of Labor.** “I am proud to sponsor this legislation alongside Senator Skoufis, with support from the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus, the Business Council of New York State, organized labor, the NAACP, and many legislative and community partners, as we work towards a more equitable workforce.”

“New York’s labor shortage is a challenge we can turn into an opportunity,” **said Assemblymember Michaelle Solages, BPHA Legislative Caucus Chair.** “The Work Opportunity Tax Credit empowers businesses to hire veterans, individuals with disabilities, and others who’ve faced barriers to employment. By putting this credit to work, we’re building a stronger, more inclusive workforce that drives New York’s economy forward.”

If passed, WOTC will implement a NYS version of an existing federal tax credit that can be claimed by any employer, of any size – including small businesses - that hires workers who are certified by a designated local agency, such as DOL, as being a member of one of 10 groups recognized as historically marginalized from the economy and/or safety net program recipients.

Identified groups include:

- Quailed IV-A Recipient
- Qualified Veteran
- Designated Community Residents (DCR)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Referrals
- Summer Youth Employees
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Recipients
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients
- Qualified Long-Term Unemployed
- Formerly Incarcerated Individuals
- Long-term Family Assistance Recipients
- Qualified Long-Term Unemployment Recipients

The New York version of WOTC honors the federal tax credit and increases the total tax credit amount by \$500 for each eligible individual hired. The maximum federal credit for

many WOTC categories is \$2,400. The additional \$500 credit increases the overall value of the credit by 20% to help subsidize the increasing recruitment, training, and wage costs that employers are struggling with in NYS.

“NYSID is thrilled to support the WOTC. Our private sector business partners at NYSID work diligently with our nonprofit member agencies to employ individuals with the right supports for success in competitive integrated employment. The increased tax credit will allow NYSID to engage more private sector business partners creating even greater employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities,” **said Maureen O’Brien, President & CEO – New York State Industries for the Disabled, Inc. (NYSID).**

Supporters also point to the potential for WOTC to have a positive impact on affordability for New York’s small businesses. In 2024 nearly every state showed some small business growth, with two exceptions: West Virginia, which saw no growth year over year, and New York, which saw a .05% decline compared to the year prior.

“Programs like these allow our state’s economy to grow while improving the lives of individuals who pay taxes and live in the communities where they work. Many of our members, especially those struggling to find talent, have long-supported programs such as the WOTC that reduce barriers because these incentives lead to a larger pool of individuals seeking work.” **Paul Zuber, Executive Vice President - The Business Council of New York State, Inc.**

“The proposed NY State Work Opportunity Tax credit helps employers create second chance opportunities for people that need assistance. It’s a win-win for NY businesses and New Yorkers that need new jobs.” **TJ Houser, General Manager - Blue Compass RV**

In Rochester, which makes up a significant portion of Assemblymember Bronson’s district, up to 1/3 of citizens live below the federal poverty line. WOTC could make significant inroads towards including underserved and underrepresented populations in the workforce and has gained widespread support from anti-poverty advocates as well as the Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce.

“At a time when we’re seeing workforce shortages across industries, it’s imperative we seek solutions that incentivize connecting talented workers with our employers. That is why Greater Rochester Chamber is proud to support the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and help ensure those who have historically faced barriers to employment find dignified work and set them on the career path they deserve.” **Bob Duffy, CEO Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce.**

The New York State Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Legislative Caucus included WOTC in their FY ‘25-26 budget priorities and endorsed the legislation as a necessary catalyst for bringing much-needed change to disadvantaged communities, pointing to the positive effect it will have on the whole of New York’s economy. NAACP echoes this support.

“The NAACP New York State Conference is proud to support the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and view it as a necessary intervention to ensure all New Yorkers are given access to gainful employment and an opportunity to provide for their families. In light of an abandoning of the priority of empowering people through employment by Washington, it is time for New York to close the gap and enact common sense measures to create opportunity for all.” **Garry Johnson, NAACP New York State Conference - Economic Development Chair**

“The proposed program is a transformative step toward empowering historically marginalized communities and addressing workforce challenges in New York,” **said caucus member, Senator Jamaal T. Bailey.** “By opening doors to meaningful employment, supporting formerly incarcerated individuals, and helping SNAP recipients achieve financial stability, this program will create pathways to success while strengthening our economy. It's not just an investment in individuals—it's an investment in New York's future.”

“The Work Tax Opportunity Credit reflects and directly addresses the needs of our New York populations who have historically experienced barriers to employment,” **said Senator Julia Salazar.** “I support the amendments proposed by Senator Skoufis and Assemblymember Bronson into the NYS 2025-2026 Budget, not only because of their beneficial precedents, but because the rigorous award allotments for corresponding work opportunities underscores that the labor of each of our neighbors is valuable.”

"The Work Opportunity Tax Credit is a win-win—helping businesses hire and giving more New Yorkers a fair shot at a steady job,” **said Senator Nathalia Fernandez.** “It's time for the state to fully leverage this program, make it a budget priority, break down employment barriers, and strengthen our workforce.”

“We need to create positive, sustained economic growth in New York State,” **said Senator Samra. G. Brouk, who also represents sections of Rochester.** “The Work Opportunity Tax Credit can uplift historically disadvantaged residents by offering new work opportunities and providing financial stability. This legislation also plays a critical role in addressing workforce shortages, paving the way for prosperity and positive change across the state.”

"Veterans deal with a number of challenges re-entering the workforce after serving, so making an effort to hire Veterans is a great way to thank them for their service while also benefiting from the knowledge and skills that come along with experience in the military. Passing WOTC will help employers hire veterans who require physical or emotional support to re-enter the workforce, and once employers do, they will realize it's more than just a tax credit they will gain from the hire." **Chris Krieger, President WNYHeroes & Pawsitive for Heroes**

"Programs like the WOTC create opportunities for New Yorkers facing employment barriers while addressing the rising costs of hiring and retaining staff. Passing the WOTC bill this

year will help our stores recruit dedicated workers and strengthen our communities by empowering individuals to reenter the workforce and achieve economic stability,” **said Alison Ritchie, President - New York Association of Convenience Stores**

“Financial and economic abuse is used in relationships where domestic violence occurs. The abuser’s goal is to limit the person’s capacity to support themselves, so they are dependent on the abuser and feel trapped in the relationship. Funding WOTC in the NYS Budget would help people who have been trapped in a cycle of long-term unemployment with employment opportunities by providing support and incentive to their potential employers. Funding WOTC would support victims in reclaiming their safety.” **Kellyann Kostyal-Larrier, Executive Director - Fearless!**

“The Arc New York urges Governor Hochul and the Legislature to include the proposed Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) in this year's state budget. Incentivizing the hiring of qualified workers from disenfranchised communities – including people with disabilities – is a win-win for the State of New York, workers, and employers alike. The proposed WOTC fully aligns with both The Arc New York’s mission to provide opportunity for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and the Governor’s vision for a prosperous and equitable New York.” **Erik C. Geizer, CEO – The ARC NY**

"At a time when the Governor and state legislators talk about affordability for New Yorkers, one of the best ways to accomplish that is through a good paying job. The WOTC helps those that are struggling to get hired. We need this bill to be passed and signed into law to help all New Yorkers afford to live and work in our great state.” **Seth Cohen, President - The Capital District Area Labor Federation (CDALF), AFL-CIO**

“Commerce Chenango fully supports legislation that will help attract qualified employees to employers in Chenango County. This legislation makes New York more competitive by amplifying the current federal tax credit, providing additional benefits to both employers and employees.” **Salvatore J. Testani, President & CEO – Chenango Commerce.**

###