



CSS STATEMENT ON SPEAKER QUINN'S STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS
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SPEAKER QUINN'S EFFORTS ARE IMPORTANT FOR LOW-INCOME NEW YORKERS

New York, NY - February 18, 2010 - Speaker Christine Quinn's priorities as outlined in her State of the City address today encouraging growing industries, strengthening existing businesses, and supporting the city's workforce are critical steps toward opportunity for low-income New Yorkers trying to gain better financial footing, including improved access to education, training, and jobs.

We are particularly encouraged by her commitment to address the current General Educational Development (GED) system. The Community Service Society has long advocated for improved educational services for New Yorkers without a high school diploma. We spent months evaluating the current GED system in New York. Our report, "**From Basic Skills to Better Skills: General Economic Dividends,**" reveals that there are more than one million working-age New Yorkers without a high school degree or equivalent, equaling nearly a quarter of the city's working-age population.

The CSS report chronicles the circuitous, inefficient, and extraordinarily dysfunctional route that more than one million New Yorkers must take in order to achieve a GED. The current GED system should be a pipeline to upward mobility for most; instead, it is a pipeline to failure for many. In the report, we identify 10 recommendations that will make New York's GED program a gateway for opportunity. Recommendations 8 – 10 will provide a strong framework for the GED program. They are; **develop a comprehensive information and referral network, expand existing referral sources and improve processes for GED testing.** We also encourage the Speaker to connect HRA and the public benefits system, and focus on GED Official Practice Test implementation.

You can read the Executive Summary of the report at <http://www.cssny.org/userimages/downloads/From%20Basic%20Skills%20to%20Better%20Futures%20-%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>