POLICY ADVICE ON REQUEST
NEW YORK STATE
DIVISION OF THE BUDGET
ALL FUNDS BUDGET REQUEST FY 2018-2019
STATE OPERATIONS

AGENCY   Office of Information Technology Services

Good afternoon Chairwoman Young, Chairwoman Weinstein, and distinguished members of the legislature. My name is Bob Samson and I am particularly pleased to be here with you because I am a New Yorker. I was born in Park Slope, Brooklyn, and lived in Greenpoint. I met my wife in Plattsburgh and we got married in Schenectady. I have worked in Utica and Syracuse, I now live in Albany, and I vacation in the Adirondack Park, in Hamilton County.

I would like to start by thanking each of you for your dedicated service to our great state.

By way of background, I was appointed to the role of New York State Chief Information Officer at the Office of Information Technology Services in May 2017. I joined state service as the CIO coming out of retirement from the private sector where I was a senior executive for a large technology company for over thirty-seven years. However, while I am relatively new to the New York State CIO job, I am no stranger to ITS.

For two years, in 2011 and 2012, I served as a volunteer on Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's Spending and Government Efficiency – or SAGE – Commission, on which I chaired the Information Technology subcommittee. In late 2012, Governor Cuomo accepted the recommendations of the SAGE Commission, executing his bold idea and vision by creating his Office of Information Technology Services.

Three fundamental factors, all of which recognize that IT touches every aspect of state government, drove this vision for change: IT is horizontal – touching every aspect of government, transformational – changing the way government delivers services to citizens, and must be secure. At its inception in 2012, the state's transformational strategy focused on: consolidation of the state's fifty-three data centers to one; consolidation of twenty-seven separate email systems into one; shifting from dedicated copper wire telephony to Voice over IP; and building a robust IT delivery network.

ITS has just turned five years old, and this work is largely complete. No other state has taken on such a project on such a scale. New York leads the nation in building an IT service delivery organization commonly referred to as "the all-in model": all of the people, all of the budgets, and all of the standards in one place. Many states look at what New York has done with envy, and we are routinely called upon to advise them on their own strategies for IT transformation.

The Executive Budget for this coming fiscal year includes $583 million in General Fund support to enable ITS to continue to provide consolidated statewide information technology services. The Executive Budget also includes $86 million in capital funds for IT innovation in enterprise-level applications and programs.

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What I would like to do now is update you on our progress since I joined the State in May 2017 and let you know what we plan to do in the coming year.

Improving New York State's cybersecurity posture:

I'm often asked, "what keeps you up at night?" My answer is consistently a data breach, cyber-attack, or ransomware event. With firewalls throughout our networks, antivirus on our systems, advanced threat detection tools, and most importantly, highly skilled cybersecurity professionals on our team, we still must continue to be vigilant against relentless, determined and increasingly sophisticated cyber criminals.

Because of this new reality, ITS has significantly improved our information security position through a mixture of investments in our cyber security professionals and new security-related technologies, including a build-out of our Cyber Command Center.

Accelerating the completion of statewide data center consolidation:

We've accelerated and will soon complete the consolidation of fifty-three data centers into one tier three plus, secure, state-of-the-art data center.

Investing in our most valuable asset, the State IT workforce:

Technology is important, but more important are the people who shape it and turn it into solutions to the problems we face as a State. We recognize this and have invested heavily in the skills of our workforce and are working with our colleagues in the Governor's Office of Employee Relations and the Public Employees Federation to continue a very strong leadership development program focused on creating the next generation of IT Leadership for the state.

We are also pleased to support Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget proposal that would authorize ITS to hire 300 persons into State roles that are currently held by consultants. This allows ITS to reduce our reliance on expensive IT consultants while adding to and supporting our current workforce of incredibly talented IT professionals. Make no mistake, ITS works in an industry that is in a constant war for talent. ITS competes with the Googles and Amazons of the world – many of which have offices right here in New York. This legislation gives New York increased flexibility to compete, which adds to our existing bench of rich and diverse talent, enables us to have effective succession planning, and saves money.

Changing how we work with our agency partners:

As a first-of-its kind state IT organization, New York is leading the nation in applying technology to the business of government and we are making significant changes to how we deliver on this promise for our agency partners. We begin by referring to the agencies we support as our *clients*. This may seem like mere semantics, but it is part of how we are changing the culture of our relatively new agency. In this regard, my Executive Deputy CIO Karen Geduldig and I have personally met with all of our client agency commissioners – all forty-six. We did this to better understand how ITS can serve them and to discuss with them how technology can be applied to what they do. These discussions can last for hours and we have found that the Commissioners are anxious to work with us.

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ITS is the sole provider of IT services for the agencies we support, and we must be best-in-class in delivering these services flawlessly. We are a more client-centric, skills-based, process driven IT organization. We are placing trusted advisors closer to our agency clients so that there is a better and tighter alignment between IT and the agency missions. To complement this work, we are creating Centers of Competence around IT-related services that all agencies need – things like project management and security. This ensures that our clients have access to the full strength of the IT talent resident in ITS while supporting knowledge sharing and career development within ITS.

Re-engineering support services:

ITS provides support services to over 130,000 people who work for New York State as well as the millions of citizens who access government services every day. We are moving from a vendor led, centralized model to a State workforce led, geographic based model that is more responsive to the unique needs of New York State government.

Delivering "*Innovation That Matters . . . For All New Yorkers*":

As I said, Governor Cuomo had the vision early on that technology is horizontal, transformational, and must be secure. It's because of this vision that Governor Cuomo created ITS. Now that ITS exists, we have an unparalleled depth, scope and insight into how technology can help solve problems that seemed impossible to solve just a few short years ago. This is what truly sets New York State apart from the rest; applying technology to solve the State's "Grand Challenges" and delivering on what is ITS's new tagline: "*Innovation That Matters . . . For All New Yorkers.*"

Where are you seeing this? Just look at Governor Cuomo's Excelsior Scholarship Program, which you passed last year. This is a first-in-the nation program making State and City college tuition free for middle-class students. This program will change the trajectory of New York State, improving the livelihoods of New Yorkers while improving the State's competitiveness overall. What you may not know is that making the Excelsior Scholarship program a reality required an immense amount of technology. Potential candidates apply online. Their eligibility is validated and their applications processed through very complex system integrations. The infrastructure behind these processes had to be robust to handle immense numbers of applicants at one time, secure to protect the personal information of applicants, and, of course, completed in less than seven weeks. I submit that such a complex and robust system could not have been developed, and on time, had an entity like ITS not been created in the first place.

This is *Innovation That Matters . . . For All New Yorkers*, and this is the promise and potential of ITS.

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In conclusion, I'd like to point out that this is New York State. We are a leader. People across the nation, if not the world, look to see how New York responds to the issues the world is confronting. As a New Yorker, I am honored to be working in an agency like ITS where the work touches every aspect of state government and continues to move New York ever upward.

Thank you for this opportunity to address you today, thank you for your service to New Yorkers, and thank you for making New York State a leader in government.