The New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo recently gave his State of the State Address in which he outlined his vision for the state and how he plans to be on the front lines of the resistance against the president. The governor is in a precarious position in that he is up for re-election in November 2018 and he might face a Democratic primary challenger in September 2018. Many have not forgotten the scare the governor received from Democratic primary challenger and political novice, Professor Zephyr Teachout, in 2014 when she received almost 34 percent of the vote. In addition to his efforts to secure a third term as New York's 56th governor, he is also rumored to have his sights on a presidential bid in 2020. But before Cuomo makes plans to take his New York values to Iowa and across the country, there are a few issues he must address.

I would like to see state investment in human services community-based organizations. These organizations get most of their funds from government contracts and are responsible for delivering services to communities, yet they operate on the margins. The workforce —made up mostly of women and largely people of color—is low paid, and the governor has not yet funded
the cost of the minimum wage in these nonprofit contracts. That must be a priority, along with investments supporting the infrastructure needs of these groups. So as the governor signs legislation for increasing minimum wages we must look at the fine print and continue to fight for the groups, organizations and individuals who are left out of state policy.

These CBOs are part of the infrastructure in communities, which is particularly important right now as we face federal policies that will deepen inequality. The state must invest in these groups in a way that puts them on fiscally sound ground. Currently, 20 percent of these organizations are insolvent. These numbers are unacceptable, and the governor must do something to address the problem.

The governor is currently branding himself as a pragmatic progressive. Very few question the governor’s pragmatic bona fides. However, his progressive credentials leave much to be desired. This governor has “come around” on issues ranging from marriage equity, decreasing the prison population and fracking to name a few issues. However, Cuomo must now lead from the front to secure the financial security of working class New Yorkers. The federal government has a bullseye on the state of New York, and we must have a governor who remembers the most vulnerable members of the state in all his decision making.

As re-election season swiftly approaches, now is the time to hold the governor accountable for his words and actions on behalf of all New Yorkers.

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