

State Sen. Gustavo Rivera and Economist James Parrott Speak to TPID

At the Three Parks Club meeting held via Zoom on June 10, club members and friends logged on to hear from State New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera and from James Parrott, an economist at The New School. Both addressed the impact of the COVID crisis on New York City.

Sen. Rivera represents the 33rd Senate District, covering large parts of the Bronx. He is the Chair of the Senate's Health Committee. He criticized Gov. Andrew Cuomo's planned budget cuts in healthcare and education, saying that low-income communities are being forced to make sacrifices while the wealthy are not. He urged grassroots Democrats to push back against budget cuts and to support raising taxes on New York's billionaires. Recalling that he had voted against

expanding the Governor's power to make discretionary cuts, Rivera pointed out that passing the long-delayed New York Health Act would deliver healthcare more economically and produce immediate significant savings.

James Parrott, the Director of Economic and Fiscal Policies at the [Center for New York City Affairs](#) at The New School, told his TPID listeners that the current economic crisis will likely be extremely severe. He estimated that the city has lost 750,000 jobs in the cultural, restaurant, retail, airline, and other sectors — and wages of \$1.5 to \$2 billion per month. Low-income communities, hourly workers, independent contractors, restaurant and hospitality employees, and small businesses have been disproportionately hard hit. Parrott predicted that many small businesses will close their doors for good by the time the crisis ends.

Parrott criticized the recently passed \$2.2 trillion federal aid package, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, arguing that much more needs to be done. In his view, there is little in the act for state and local government relief, given what is sure to be a shrinking tax base and lost revenue, and given that the act is time limited, with many of the benefits expiring by the end of July. The act, he added, reflects a punitive attitude toward low-income people who don't file tax returns and the undocumented.

“We need substantial additional federal relief that addresses the gaps,” he said. To raise tax revenues, Parrott also proposed a federal stock-transfer tax, a New York City pied-a-terre tax, a significant increase in New York State corporate taxes, “which are now at historically low levels,” and higher taxes in

multimillionaires and
billionaires.

←

←