

# Limousine liberals won't be hit by congestion pricing — but middle-class New Yorkers will

By City Council Minority Leader Joe Borelli

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Intestinal fortitude is a rare commodity in politics, and nowhere was its absence more evident than in the word salads [Gov. Kathy Hochul tossed up on congestion pricing](#) in last month's Democratic primary debates.

Congestion pricing is an awful plan. It hasn't [worked in London](#). It won't work here. And the governor must have correctly sized it up, as [she told a debate audience](#) that “now is not the right time” and new “hurdles” might be difficult to overcome.

Of course, that wasn't the end of it.

The Democratic Party no longer caters to the diverse working-class outer-borough families who make up the majority of our city. Instead, it is the elitist, brownstone-occupying, Aperol-spritz-with-a-side-of-socialism-sipping woke progressives who bend its political arc. And that crowd is anti-car *über alles*.

By the time political pressure from this class and her own consultant cadre flexed its muscle, Hochul was forced to assure all that she was “100%” committed to implementing the scheme. That was just a few nights later, when she couldn't quite gather why folks might have taken her at her word the week prior. She loves congestion pricing, she proclaimed, and was “not sure where the allegation came that I don't.”

This episode is evidence that while her instincts might be correct, there will always be a tiny woke elf resting on Hochul's left shoulder whispering in her ear. She knows congestion pricing will fail and hurt millions of families in the process — but that elf is a charming little fella.

Besides, who cares when the state helicopter is shuttling you, gratis?

Let's be clear what we're taking about. Millions of New Yorkers are on the brink of paying hundreds or thousands more each year for the mere privilege of traveling from one side of their city to the other. The daily cost — now finally in writing — is [projected to be between \\$9 and \\$35](#).

It could you cost more in tolls to drive between Queens Borough Hall to City Hall in Manhattan than from our City Hall to San Francisco's City Hall through I-80, [per Tollguru.com](#).

Shame on any politician who thinks this is acceptable. Shame on any voter who supports punishing our middle class. Still, our current challenge stems from the fact that so many progressives like Kathy Hochul are already in office.

In case you haven't figured it out, I'll sum up their transportation policy: Cars are evil; car owners are the enemy; and to hell with those who have to motor themselves to their workplace, doctor or the grocery store.

Things once were different. If you lived in one of the city's outer-borough transit deserts, aspiring officeholders promised to help. Now, the Albany regime has nothing to offer but taxes, tolls, fines and fees. Register your car — Zap! Pay up! Go a smidgen too fast — Boom! Check your mailbox for your fine. Then factor in Joe Biden [doubling down on high gas](#) prices, and it's fair to assume the Democratic Party as a whole no longer cares about your kitchen-table issues.

Yet here we are. The 2022 state Democratic ticket simply takes for granted that a majority will go blindly into the polls to happily vote themselves a higher cost of living in a state Dems already engineered to have the highest in the country. It's literally their platform.

You shouldn't be surprised. Look at how their "real" base benefits from congestion pricing: Swanky Manhattan neighborhoods might see less traffic, and upper-income commuters will use over-budget central-core expansions like the Second Avenue subway and a re-signaled Lexington Avenue line.

Those same posh Manhattanites who already pay two to three times lower effective property-tax rates under our city's inequitable system will reap the benefits of having poor schlubs from Brooklyn drive into "their" neighborhood. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority isn't proposing any new lines to southeast Queens or Staten Island, after all.

Recall, when Mayor Michael Bloomberg first pushed congestion pricing, much of it was geared toward [improving connections](#) to underserved transit deserts. Now the goal is seemingly to make up for the MTA's own capital shortfalls — which, by the way, exist despite [already implementing](#) a congestion charge on for-hire vehicles south of 96th Street.

Therein lies my final point. Generating \$1 billion annually to help finance a capital plan is not chump change, but it's hardly enough to make real change. That is, unless Albany Democrats continue to increase the price over time. Just look at how much the MTA's bridge tolls have grown in 20 years.

Can you imagine having the ability to go back in time to stop the MTA from eventually charging you a \$20 roundtrip toll? Well, you don't have to. This November, vote against any politician promising congestion pricing.

In the end, all roads lead to revenue.

*Joe Borelli is the minority leader of the New York City Council.*

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**[View](#) the the Council Member's earlier March 16, 2022 *New York Post* Op-ed.**