Fiscal Policy Institute
540 Broadway
Albany, NY 12207
fiscalpolicy.org

info@fiscalpolicy.org

Honoring Frank Mauro (1946–2026)



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We mourn the loss of the Fiscal Policy Institute's Executive Director Emeritus Frank Mauro, who passed away on September 17 at the age of eighty.

Mauro was the Executive Director of FPI from 1993 to 2013, taking the helm shortly after the organization's creation in 1991. As the long-time leader of one of the first state-level think tanks founded to serve the interests of low-income and working-class households, Mauro helped inaugurate a new era for state policy analysis that continues to shape progressive policymaking around the country.

Frank Mauro was regarded as one of Albany's best-known experts on budget and public policy issues. He earned this reputation through a lifetime of research, teaching, and public service. In 1975 Mauro became the founding director of the Assembly Office of Research and Analysis; four years later he held the same title in Assembly Speaker Stanley Fink's Program Development Group, which he ran until 1983. From that year until 1986 he served as Secretary of the New York State Assembly Ways and Means Committee. The following year, Mauro became the Director of Research for the last major revision of the New York City Charter, after which he served as Deputy Director of the State University of New York's Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, a position he held until he joined FPI. He twice received the Air Force Commendation Medal for his work in the field of race relations.

Mauro worked to ensure the voices of working-class and struggling families were heard in debates over key economic and fiscal issues. His achievements transcended politics and partisanship, and under his leadership FPI developed into a credible and effective research and

advocacy organization, becoming the go-to source for impartial budget analysis. As Melinda Person of New York State United Teachers put it, "He understood something fundamental: a state budget is more than numbers on a page."

Mauro was the social and economic conscience of Albany politics. He helped legislators understand the ramifications of their proposals and drew attention to unintended consequences invisible to everyone else. New York State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie remembered him as "a one-of-a-kind, dedicated public servant who spent his decades-long career in Albany committed to improving our state tax system and making life better for New Yorkers." Heastie added that Mauro was "always a great help to me and my team."

Frank Mauro's writing and commentary increased public understanding of the causes and consequences of growing income inequality in New York and elsewhere; and his analysis provided important context for New York's tax system, benchmarks for evaluating the stability and adequacy of state and local public services, and tools for understanding social conditions in the state's communities.

Under his leadership, FPI's annual presentation analyzing the proposed state budget became a significant event in Albany's budget debate. His reports, statewide public education forums, radio show, and frequent media appearances provided valuable insight and important information that capitol insiders and the public needed to know.

As Ron Deutsch of New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness said, his efforts "laid the groundwork for so many campaigns and movements that continue to this day." Mauro devoted many years to helping researchers in other states start groups similar to FPI—these eventually grew into a national network of organizations led by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

As he was retiring from FPI in 2013, Mauro observed the following, "The health of our Democracy really depends on meaningful debate using solid information and analysis. The Fiscal Policy Institute has focused on the challenge of creating better understanding of issues and fostering more informed conversations about those issues—based on facts. That is the route to better public policy."

In a statement that rings emphatically true today, he added, "New York, our nation, our world are facing complex problems that affect a lot of people and require more than just sound bites for solutions."

Mauro was also an invaluable resource to elected officials, union leaders, journalists, advocates, academics, and students looking for information on a wide range of policy issues. At his core, he was an educator. Not only to the students he taught at Rockefeller Institute but to the countless advocates and others with whom he spent long hours boiling down complex policy concerns into understandable information.

As Senator Liz Krueger recalled, "We always arranged for him to speak first and me afterwards, so I could translate some of his more complex presentations into simpler language. He was quite the academic and so generous with his knowledge."

Mauro was a mentor and friend to so many. His legacy lives on in the lives he has touched throughout the halls of the capitol and the nation.

Our deepest condolences[a] to his beloved family

Remembrances

“Frank had this wild enthusiasm for fiscal policy that is hard to describe. … It was always a joyful education from Frank. We are so lucky to have had his thoughtful and principled brain and heart working to make things better in New York State.” —Kate Breslin, Schuyler Center

“Frank Mauro proved knowledge is power in every arena he entered and always did as a thoughtful gentleman.” —David Langdon, Albany wise man and friend and colleague of Frank at the NYS Commission on Cable Television, NYS assembly, and beyond

“Frank Mauro was an enthusiastic, determined, and successful advocate for working people. He was always genuine and focused on improving people’s lives, and he did just that. It was an honor and a privilege to work with Frank over his lengthy career dedicated to helping others.” —Mario Cilento, President, New York State AFL-CIO

“Frank Mauro was a public servant at heart. From his decorated service in the Air Force to his long career in the NYS Assembly and the Fiscal Policy Institute, Frank worked to improve the lives of his fellow New Yorkers. My deepest sympathies to his family.” —Thomas DiNapoli, New York State Comptroller

“Frank was a giant in his field. There really was a Frank Mauro Era of budget politics in Albany. … I learned so much from Frank about policy issues. But even more I learned about the role meticulous, often behind-the-scenes research can play in making a real difference.” —David Dyssegaard Kallick, Director, Immigration Research Initiative

“Frank was strongly committed to economic justice, from state workers to low-income New Yorkers. A humble individual, he always treated everyone with respect, a rarity from someone with his stature. … His leadership, compassion, and knowledge are much missed.” —Mark Dunlea, former Executive Director, Hunger Action Network

Links a https://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/49811919/frank-j.-mauro