

This Week in New York

Covering New York State and City Government

A Publication of Pitta Bishop Del Giorno & Giblin LLC
March 22, 2013 Edition



In the News – New York State



This Week in Women's History

March 17, 1910 – Camp Fire Girls is established as the first interracial, non-sectarian American organization for girls.

March 20, 1852 – Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, is published and becomes the best-selling book of the 19th century.

March 21, 1986 – Debi Thomas becomes first African American woman to win the World Figure Skating Championship.

March 23, 1917 – Virginia Woolf establishes the Hogarth Press with her husband, Leonard Woolf.

March 25, 1911 - The Triangle Factory Fire - Over 146 people died -- mostly Jewish and Italian immigrant women between the ages of sixteen and twenty-three -- due to fire, smoke inhalation, or jumping or falling from the building. Most of the victims were not able to escape due to a common practice of the managers locking the doors to the stairs and exits to prevent the workers from taking unauthorized breaks.

The fire was a pivotal event in U.S. History and led to the legislation that improved working conditions. It also led to the emergence of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union who fought for better sweatshop conditions. The building now known as the Brown Building is a National Historic Landmark and New York City landmark.

March 31, 1888 – The National Council of Women of the U.S. is organized by Susan B. Anthony, Clara Barton, Julia Ward Howe, and Sojourner Truth, among others, the oldest non-sectarian women's organization in the U.S.



Your Fourth Finger is “Live”

*To Determine When a Bill is Ready for Legislative Action
Start with the Day it is Printed & Count to Four*

New York State Constitution

§ 14. No bill shall be passed or become a law unless it shall have been printed and upon the desks of the members, in its final form, at least three calendar legislative days prior to its final passage, unless the governor, or the acting governor, shall have certified, under his or her hand and the seal of the state, the facts which in his or her opinion necessitate an immediate vote thereon, in which case it must nevertheless be upon the desks of the members in final form, not necessarily printed, before its final passage; nor shall any bill be passed or become a law, except by the assent of a majority of the members elected to each branch of the legislature; and upon the last reading of a bill, no amendment thereof shall be allowed, and the question upon its final passage shall be taken immediately thereafter, and the ayes and nays entered on the journal.

As the legislative leaders and the Governor hammer out the details of their 2013-2014 conceptual budget agreement, the question of when the bills will be ready for action becomes increasingly important.

This year’s budget negotiations are framed around Passover (beginning sundown on Monday, March 25th) and Easter (Sunday, March 31st). The leaders targeted Thursday, March 21st for final passage, but that date came and went as the budget details proved to be more vexing than hoped.

With only four days to go, the count may make legislative budget approval a sprint to the finish against a backdrop of Monday’s setting sun (to make the Passover deadline) or a midweek legislative return sandwiched between the two holidays.

Below is a chart of where the budget bills are right now and when they will be ready:

<u>Bill</u>	<u>Print Date</u>	<u>Live Date</u>
Public Protection & General Government Article VII (A3005D/S2605D)	Wednesday	Saturday
Transportation, Economic Development & Environmental Conservation Article VII (A3008D/S2608D)	Wednesday	Saturday
Legislature and Judiciary Budget Bill (S 2601-A/A 3001-A)	Wednesday	Saturday
Capital Projects (A3004E/S2604E)	Thursday	Sunday
State Operations (A3000/S2600?)	???	???
Aid to Localities (A3003/S2603?)	???	???
Health and Mental Hygiene Article VII (A3006/S3606?)	???	???
Education, Labor and Family Assistance Article VII (A 3007/S2607?)	???	???
Revenue (A3009/S2609?)	???	???

Note: The State Debt Service bill passed earlier this week.

The outstanding bills deal with the major portions of the proposed State \$143 billion spending plan. Those bills will not be able to be voted on until Monday at the earliest, if printed by midnight tonight. Otherwise, the legislature is looking at a possible Wednesday return.

Currently, both houses are scheduled to return late Sunday afternoon.

Maybe it Should be a \$350 Debit Card Not Check

Legislators Tout \$350 Check for NYers with Children in Budget

T&F Promotes Debit Cards for Tax Refund

State Legislators and the Cuomo Administration alike are touting the 2013-2014 budget deal as family friendly, citing the provision that will give over \$1 million New York families a \$350 tax credit beginning in 2014.

According to the Division of Budget, “as part of the agreement reached by the Governor, the Senate, and the Assembly, families with incomes between \$40,000 and \$300,000 will be eligible to receive a new child tax credit of \$350 per-year for three years. The credit, which will be delivered as a check, will begin in 2014.”

However, also today, the State Department of Taxation and Finance issued a release promoting its debit card as “faster, more secure, and easier to use than a paper check.”

“The refund debit card is secure, cost efficient, and easy to use,” said Commissioner Thomas H. Mattox. “Taxpayers, even those without bank accounts, can take it to any bank and withdraw the entire amount.”

Taxation and Finance also asserted that “debit cards for tax refunds can reduce incidents of checks stolen from mail boxes. Taxpayers can also avoid check cashing fees. And, if a debit card is lost, it is protected against all unauthorized transactions. Replacement cards are free.”

According to the Division of Budget, \$375 million in rebate checks will be delivered to 1,071,429 New York households. Examples of the rebates include: New York City – 360,062 families will receive \$126 million; Suffolk County – 109,585 families will receive \$38 million; Nassau County – 104,086 families will receive \$36 million; Westchester County – 65,156 families will receive \$23 million; Erie County – 66,180 will receive \$23 million (dollar values rounded).

Estimates of the administrative costs associated with the rebates (including postage) were not readily available.

In the News – New York City

Where Does Your Council Member Stand on Paid Sick Leave?

As City Council members listened to testimony from stakeholders on the NYC Paid Sick Time Act, Common Cause appealed to New Yorkers to find out where their representatives stood on the issue.

Common Cause last week surveyed all 51 members of the City Council regarding their position on two questions:



- 1. Do you believe that the NYC Paid Sick Time Act deserves to receive a vote this session?*
- 2. Do you support developing procedural reforms that would allow bills with strong support to get a vote on the floor?*

Common Cause/NY received 34 positive responses and the group has now taken their efforts to the people, requesting that they contact the outstanding members for a response. To follow is the group's public appeal:

WHERE DOES YOUR COUNCIL MEMBER STAND?

Bills addressing important issues facing New York City residents deserve a vote in the City Council!

Important bills don't get a vote because decision-making is overly centralized in the Council. Council Members should be able to do their jobs and get a vote on important bills, like the Paid Sick Leave bill

This situation must change!

Is your Councilmember satisfied with the status quo or willing to do something about it?

We've delivered a letter to every member of the City Council to answer these two questions:

Do you believe that the NYC Paid Sick Time Act deserves to receive a vote this session?

Do you support developing procedural reforms that would allow bills with strong support to get a vote on the floor?

We need your help to get answers from every Council member who has not responded, to thank everyone that is supporting and urge those opposing to change their position, call or email today and ask their position. Then report back at the bottom of the page, we'll keep track using the form below.

(Chart Based Upon information on Common Cause website)

Name	Position re: Vote on NYC Paid Sick Time Act	Position re: Procedural reforms
Maria del Carmen Arroyo	supports	supports
Charles Barron	supports	supports
Gale Brewer	supports	supports
Fernando Cabrera	supports	supports
Margaret Chin	supports	supports
<i>Leroy Comrie, Jr.*</i>		
Elizabeth Crowley	supports	supports
<i>Inez Dickens*</i>		
<i>Erick Martin Dilan*</i>		
Daniel Dromm	supports	supports
Mathieu Eugene	supports	supports
Julissa Ferreras	supports	supports

Name	Position re: Vote on NYC Paid Sick Time Act	Position re: Procedural reforms
<i>Lewis Fidler*</i>		
Helen Foster	supports	supports
Daniel Garodnick	supports	supports
<i>James Gennaro*</i>		
Vincent Gentile	supports	supports
Sara Gonzalez	supports	supports
<i>David Greenfield*</i>		
<i>Daniel Halloran*</i>		
<i>Vincent Ignizio*</i>		
Robert Jackson	supports	supports
Letitia James	supports	supports
Andy King	supports	supports
<i>Peter Koo*</i>		
G. Oliver Koppell	supports	supports
Karen Koslowitz	supports	supports
Brad Lander	supports	supports
Jessica Lappin	supports	supports
Stephen Levin	supports	supports
Melissa Mark-Viverito	supports	supports
Darlene Mealy	supports	supports
Rosie Mendez	supports	supports
<i>Michael Nelson*</i>		
<i>James Oddo*</i>		
Annabel Palma	supports	supports
<i>Christine Quinn*</i>		
<i>Domenic Recchia, Jr.*</i>		
Diana Reyna	supports	silent
Donovan Richards	supports	supports
<i>Joel Rivera*</i>		
Ydanis Rodriguez	supports	supports
Deborah Rose	supports	supports
Eric Ulrich	supports	supports
James Vacca	supports	supports
<i>Peter Vallone, Jr.*</i>		
Jimmy Van Bramer	supports	supports
<i>Albert Vann*</i>		
Mark Weprin	supports	supports
Jumaane Williams	supports	supports
<i>Ruben Wills*</i>		

Italics & () indicate no response to survey*

Mayor Bloomberg And Comptroller Liu Unveil Reforms to City Subcontracting Requirements

New Reporting System Will Increase Transparency & Reduce Possibility for Fraudulent Billing

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Comptroller John C. Liu this week announced that New York City will establish a comprehensive subcontracting database and publicly report payments made by prime contractors to subcontractors.

The officials hope the reforms will strengthen the City's ability to detect and address potentially fraudulent billing practices, further ensure the timeliness of payments from contractors to subcontractors, and track the utilization of minority- and women-owned businesses on subcontracted City work. The Mayor's Office of Contract Services and the Comptroller's Office have been working on this subcontracting initiative for more than a year, and recently began a pilot program with vendors serving as initial testers.

Beginning this month, on any new contract valued over \$1 million, all prime vendors will have to disclose information on the City's Payee Information Portal, including the names of subcontractors hired as well as each and every payment to them. In June, the ceiling is lowered to contracts above \$250,000, which will ensure approximately 96 percent of all dollars spent on City contracts are captured in this new database. In the event a prime vendor fails to carry out their responsibility, the City has the right to withhold payment until all requirements have been met. Once these new protocols are established, each payment and data set will be fully integrated with the Comptroller's Checkbook NYC fiscal transparency.

The City modeled its groundbreaking reforms on the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, which was signed into law in 2006 and requires Federal contractors to disclose their subcontractors through a searchable website. Expanding beyond the Federal model, the City publicly discloses both the names of subcontractors and payments made to them.

Briefs

New York City Readies to Submit \$1.77B Sandy Plan to Federal Government

The Bloomberg Administration is preparing to submit its action plan for Superstorm Sandy relief to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced today. A 14-day public comment period on the plan also begins today.

Announced in February, New York City's plan calls for housing initiatives of \$720 million, with \$350 million going to rehabilitating single-family houses, \$250 million to multi-family houses and \$120 million to public housing; \$140 million will go toward infrastructure in a competitive grant format; and businesses will get \$185 million: \$100 million of that will be used to provide grants to 1,300 businesses. Of that portion, small and mid-sized companies will be eligible for \$100,000 grants. Large businesses in hard-hit areas will be eligible for \$1 million grants. Of the remaining \$85 million, \$80 million will be set aside for loans up to \$150,000 and grants up to \$60,000; \$5 million will be given to companies for developing "resiliency measures."

Comptroller DiNapoli: Tax Collections Declined in February

Total tax collections trailed the latest projections in the amended Executive Budget Financial Plan released last month, according to the February cash report released this week by State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli. Tax collections through February totaled \$59.9 billion, 2.6 percent higher than the same period a year ago although collections in the month of February were 5.6 percent lower than collections for the same period last year.

"Despite positive signs in the economy, we are still not seeing the strength in tax collections that would indicate robust growth," Comptroller DiNapoli said. "Receipts were up in December and January, primarily because of federal tax changes. February's decline illustrates that trend will likely not continue. As the new budget is finalized, efforts should focus on enacting a spending plan that recognizes this reality."

SUNY Trustees Vote to Close Long Island College Hospital

The SUNY Board of Trustees this week "took the difficult but necessary step" of supporting the decision to close Long Island College Hospital (LICH), according to a statement by SUNY.

"We commend Dr. John Williams and his team at Downstate Medical for their commitment to preserving and ultimately strengthening this hidden jewel of the SUNY system, which is so critical to educating our doctors and other medical professionals, and treating Brooklyn's residents. "What we need now is for our state's leaders to show the same strong commitment - not just to Downstate Medical Center but to all of SUNY's medical schools and hospitals."

Following the vote, layoff notices were mailed late Tuesday to the homes of 1,800 Long Island College Hospital employees. With the initiation of the 90-day WARN provision, the hospital could shut down as soon as June 17 if the state Health Department approves its closure.

Downstate bought LICH in 2011.

Department of Financial Services Identifies 10 Banks with Worst Sandy Aid Statistics

On Average, the ‘Bottom Ten’ Banks Are Holding Back Nearly Half of the Sandy Insurance Funds They Have Received, Well Above Industry-wide Average of 17 Percent

	Total Amount of Insurance Proceeds Still Being Held	Percent of Insurance Proceeds Still Being Held
Selene Finance	\$1,872,333	71%
Select Portfolio	\$4,859,158	56%
Astoria Federal	\$3,668,003	48%
Capital One	\$3,700,158	45%
Nationstar Mortgage	\$6,032,216	44%
Flagstar	\$2,922,580	43%
Specialized Loan	\$1,373,576	41%
OneWest Bank	\$14,332,160	39%
Sun Trust Mortgage	\$712,884	39%
Mid-Island Mortgage	\$1,251,184	38%
Total Dollars/Average %	\$40,724,252	44%

Coming Up

New York State

There are no meetings the week of March 25th

New York City

There are no meetings the week of March 25th

The next issue of *This Week in New York* will be published on March 27th.

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111 Washington Ave, St. 401
Albany, New York 12210
Telephone (518) 449-3320
Facsimile (518) 449-5812

120 Broadway, 28th Floor
New York, New York 10271
Telephone (212) 652-3890
Facsimile (212) 652-3891

50 Main Street, 10th Floor
White Plains, NY 10606
Telephone (914) 682-2632
Facsimile (914) 663-5180

191 Grand Central Ave.
Amityville, NY 11701
Telephone (516) 742-8930
Facsimile (516) 742-8937