



# This Week in New York

Covering New York State and City Government

A Publication of Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC

February 23, 2018 Edition



## *In the News – New York State*



Source: Channel 12 New Jersey

## Governors Cuomo, Malloy, Murphy, and Raimondo Form "States for Gun Safety" Coalition

### *New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Rhode Island Enter into Agreement to Create Multi-State Database That Will Share Information on Firearms, Law Enforcement Efforts, and Supplement Federal NICS Database*

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, Connecticut Governor Dan Malloy, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, and Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo this week announced the formation of the new "States for Gun Safety" coalition to combat gun violence.

The coalition will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to better share information and advance a multi-state database to supplement the federal National Instant Criminal Background Check System. In addition, the effort will trace and intercept guns that are used in crimes as well as guns transported across state borders, and launch the nation's first Regional Gun Violence Research Consortium.

As part of the Coalition, New York, Connecticut, New Jersey and Rhode Island will share information about individuals who are prohibited from purchasing or possessing a firearm within each state. By sharing this information, states can more effectively prevent certain individuals from purchasing a gun, obtaining a weapon, and/or getting a gun permit.

The agreement, in accordance with federal and state privacy protections, will provide state law enforcement agencies with details on the firearm purchase or permit denials for those who are disqualified. People may be disqualified from owning a firearm for several reasons, including an arrest warrant, order of protection, debilitating mental health condition, or criminal history.

New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Rhode Island will direct their law enforcement intelligence centers to work cooperatively to trace the use of out-of-state guns in crimes and share information in order to intercept criminals transporting illegal guns across state borders.

The four state centers that will jointly share information under this agreement are the New York State Intelligence Center, the Connecticut Intelligence Center, New Jersey Regional Operations Intelligence Center, and the Rhode Island State Fusion Center.

The four states will also designate colleges and universities to create the nation's first Regional Gun Violence Research Consortium. The consortium will be comprised of public health, social welfare, public policy, and criminal justice experts who will share and examine data to better inform policymakers nationwide.

On the federal level, the Coalition will call on the federal government to enact universal background checks, an assault weapons ban, and a federal waiting period between the purchase and delivery of guns.



## **DFS Releases Guidance to Help Local Governments Improve Health Insurance Options and Address Rising Health Costs**

The State Department of Financial Services (DFS) will publish guidance and provide technical assistance to local governments to ease the process of creating health consortia called Muni Coops, health risk-sharing agreements that permit municipal corporations to help share costs of health benefits for their collective employees.

This guidance, specifically for smaller municipalities, will help local governments improve their health insurance options while addressing rising health costs in New York State. Governor Andrew Cuomo directed the initiative.

According to the Governor, many municipalities have considered forming a Muni Coop but have raised concerns that some of the statutory requirements act as a barrier to that objective. The guidance published by DFS seeks to clarify some of the key statutory requirements governing Muni Coops to make Muni Coops more accessible for local governments. Municipalities may consider using Muni Coops to:

- Help share the costs of employee health benefit plans;
- Provide an alternative approach to stabilize health claim costs;
- Lower per-unit administration costs; and
- Enhance negotiating power with health providers by spreading such costs among a larger pool of risks.

The guidance issued by DFS aims to provide accurate information, counter misconceptions about requirements, and clarify what is needed to establish and maintain a Muni Coop under Article 47 of the Insurance Law. This guidance addresses stop-loss flexibility, as well as geographic boundaries, size and other issues.

DFS has already begun working with a number of municipalities around the state, including Otsego, Saratoga, and Suffolk counties. The Department approved a new Muni Coop in Rochester that started last month.

DFS has also posted a 2011 report on its website entitled "Municipal Cooperative Health Benefit Plans - Impact of Claim Reserve Requirements," to help municipal corporations investigating whether to form a cooperative.

## ***In the News – New York City***



### **NYC Experiencing Record Job Growth**

Job growth in New York City has outpaced the nation and New York state since the end of the recession, according to a report released this week by State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli. The City added a total of 702,200 jobs between 2009 and 2017.

"New York City is undergoing the largest and longest expansion since World War II," Comptroller DiNapoli said. "Employment is at a record level and more jobs are being created in the boroughs outside of Manhattan than ever before."

Employment in New York City increased by 18.9 percent between 2009 and 2017, pushing employment to 4.4 million in 2017. The nation and New York state had job gains of 11.5 percent during this period.

According to the Comptroller, the City has been the driving force behind employment growth in the state, accounting for nearly three-quarters of the gains since 2009. The City posted a gain of 72,700 jobs in 2017.

While the securities industry is still an important part of the City's economy, its contribution to job growth has been modest in recent years, the Comptroller found. Growth has been driven by health care, business services (particularly tech and media companies), and tourism-related businesses, such as restaurants.

Nearly half of the job gains since 2009 have been in the boroughs outside of Manhattan. Brooklyn had the fastest rate of private sector job growth in the five boroughs since 2009 (38 percent), followed by Queens (24 percent), Manhattan (20 percent), Bronx (15 percent), and Staten Island (14 percent), according to the report.

Private sector employment in the city increased by 23 percent between 2009 and 2017, Comptroller DiNapoli noted. Ten neighborhoods had growth that exceeded 40 percent: Bedford-Stuyvesant; Borough Park; Flatbush; Sheepshead Bay/Gravesend; Central Harlem; Bensonhurst; Coney Island; Williamsburg/Greenpoint; Bay Ridge and Howard Beach/South Ozone Park. No neighborhood in the City lost jobs between 2009 and 2017.

Comptroller DiNapoli's report also found:

- **Business services sector** was the largest source of new jobs during the expansion, adding 174,400 jobs from 2009 to 2017.
- **Health care** added 21,400 jobs in 2017, bringing total employment to 519,000, 28 percent more than in 2009.
- **Leisure and hospitality sector** accounted for one-fifth of the gains between 2009 and 2017 (139,400 jobs). More than three-quarters of the gains were in bars and restaurants.
- **Retail sector** lost jobs in each of the past two years as brick and mortar stores face increased competition from online retailers. Despite losses in the past two years, the retail sector still accounted for 8 percent of the gains since 2009.



## J. Phillip Thompson Appointed Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives

Mayor Bill de Blasio this week appointed J. Phillip Thompson as Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives. He will replace Richard Buery.

Deputy Mayor Thompson is an Associate Professor of Political Science and Urban Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he also oversees the Housing, Community and Economic Development Group. Prior to joining MIT, Thompson worked at Columbia University and Barnard College.

He began his career in New York City government first as Policy Assistant to then Manhattan Borough President David Dinkins. Deputy Mayor Thompson oversaw then Mayor Dinkins' Office of Housing Coordination, and served as the Deputy General Manager for Operations and Development at NYCHA.

“Phillip is one of the foremost experts on how to better serve and lift up low-income neighborhoods, and has spent decades fighting in the trenches for progressive causes. He will make sure our agencies are working together to make New York City the fairest big city in the nation. As New Yorkers, we're all very lucky he decided to come home, said Mayor Bill de Blasio.

In addition to his education and public service, Deputy Mayor Thompson has served as an advisor to trade unions in their efforts to work with immigrant and community groups across the United States.

He received a B.A. in Sociology from Harvard University in 1977, a M.U.P. from Hunter College and a PhD in Political Science from the City University of New York.

“Phil Thompson is an ardent advocate for equitable access to healthcare. He helped us to make the connection with how our labor issues are specifically linked with the needs of the community served by Interfaith Medical Center,” said Jill Furillo, Executive Director of the New York State Nurses Association.

## ***Briefs***

### **Lowest Adult Smoking Rates in New York State History**

The adult smoking rate has fallen to the lowest in New York State's recorded history. The statewide adult smoking rate is 14.2 percent as of 2016, below the national average of 15.5 percent.

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, an annual statewide telephone survey of adults developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and administered by the New York State Department of Health, found the following:

- Smoking rates have declined even more dramatically among young adults age 18-24 years, decreasing by 46 percent, from 21.6 percent in 2011 to 11.7 percent in 2016.
- Less than a high school education, where the smoking rate decreased 25 percent - from 25.7 percent in 2011 to 19.2 percent in 2016.
- Annual household incomes below \$25,000 where the smoking rate decreased 29 percent - from 27.8 percent in 2011 to 19.8 percent in 2016.
- Poor mental health -- defined as reported problems with stress, depression or emotions on at least 14 of the previous 30 days -- where the smoking rate decreased 20 percent - from 32.6 percent in 2011 to 26.0 percent in 2016.



## **Speaker Corey Johnson, Public Advocate Letitia James, Comptroller Scott Stringer, Borough Presidents, and Council Members Send Letter to Chief Judge Janet DiFiore to Ban ICE from New York Courthouses**

Council Speaker Corey Johnson, Immigration Committee Chair Carlos Menchaca, Public Advocate Letitia James, Comptroller Scott Stringer, Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, and Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr., have issued a letter to call on Chief Judge Janet DiFiore to ban U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents from New York State courts.

According to Council Speaker Johnson, over the last year, New York courthouses have seen a 900% increase in reports of ICE arrests or attempted arrests, some of which are for individuals with no prior criminal history. In the process, several documented immigrants holding green cards and valid visas have been arrested as well.

The letter requests that Judge DiFiore utilize her constitutional authority to protect the civil rights of New York's immigrants and uphold the sanctity of our courts.

"ICE agents entering courts not only interferes with highly sensitive matters being handled in our court system, but also creates a culture of fear amongst both documented and undocumented immigrants," said Speaker Corey Johnson. "If we are to be a City that respects the judicial process, we must keep ICE out of our courts. I join my colleagues in calling on Chief Judge DiFiore to do the right thing."

### **MTA Ridership down**

Annual MTA subway ridership dropped for the second consecutive year in 2017, according to data presented in an MTA Transit Committee meeting. Approximately 1.727 billion trips were taken on the subway over the course of 2017, down almost 30 million trips from 2016. A total of 1.756 billion trips were taken in 2016.

### **NYC Council Hearings on the Mayor's Budget**

The New York City Council has released its hearing schedule for consideration of Mayor Bill de Blasio's 2019 Preliminary Budget. The list of hearings, which begin on March 5<sup>th</sup>, can be accessed [here](#).

## ***Coming Up***

### ***New York State***

### ***NYS Legislature session Tuesday, February 27<sup>th</sup> & Wednesday February 28<sup>th</sup>***

## ***New York City***

### ***Monday February 26<sup>th</sup>***

***Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises***, Committee Room, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor – 250 Broadway, 9:30 a.m.

***Committee on Housing and Buildings***, Committee Room – City Hall, 10 a.m.

***Committee on Fire and Emergency Management***, Committee Room – City Hall, 10 a.m.

***Committee on Public Safety***, Committee Room – City Hall, 10 a.m.

***Committee on Justice System***, Committee Room – City Hall, 10 a.m.

***Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses***, Committee Room, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor – 250 Broadway, 12 p.m.

***Committee on Environmental Protection***, Committee Room, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor – 250 Broadway, 1 p.m.

***Committee on Finance***, Committee Room – City Hall, 1 p.m.

***Committee on Transportation***, Council Chambers – City Hall, 1 p.m.

***Subcommittee on Planning, Dispositions and Concessions***, Committee Room, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor – 250 Broadway, 2 p.m.

### ***Tuesday February 27<sup>th</sup>***

***Committee on Education***, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.

***Committee on Health***, Committee Room, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor – 250 Broadway, 10 a.m.

***Committee on Justice System***, Committee Room – City Hall, 10 a.m.

***Committee on Land Use***, Committee Room, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor – 250 Broadway, 11 a.m.

***Committee Contracts***, Committee Room, City Hall, 1 p.m.

***Committee on General Welfare***, Committee Room, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor – 250 Broadway, 1 p.m.

***Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities and Addiction***, Committee Room, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor – 250 Broadway, 1 p.m.

### ***Wednesday February 28<sup>th</sup>***

***Committee on Aging***, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.

*Committee on Parks and Recreation*, Committee Room, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor – 250 Broadway, 10 a.m.

*Committee on Libraries and International Intergroup Relations*, Committee Room – City Hall, 10 a.m.

*Committee on Criminal Justice*, Tour – Rikers Island 1616, Hazen St. East Elmhurst, NY, 10 a.m.

*Committee on Small Business*, Committee Room, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor – 250 Broadway, 10 a.m.

*Committee on Juvenile Justice*, Committee Room, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor – 250 Broadway, 1 p.m.

*Committee on Technology*, Committee Room, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor – 250 Broadway, 1 p.m.

*Committee on Hospitals*, Council Chambers – City Hall, 1 p.m.

*Committee on Civil and Human Rights*, Committee Room – City Hall, 1 p.m.

*Committee on Women*, Committee Room – City Hall, 1 p.m.

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