



This Week in New York

Covering New York State and City Government

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In the News – State



Minimum Wage Increases

The State’s minimum wage hike went into effect January 1st, with earnings rising to \$15 per hour for large employers in New York City and continuing increases across the state. In coordination with the increase, the New York State Department of Labor launched a public education campaign to raise awareness about the new minimum wage. Workers are urged to contact the Wage Theft Hotline (1-888-4-NYS-DOL) to report employers not complying with the increase.

General Minimum Wage Rate				
Location	12/31/18	12/31/19	12/31/20	2021
NYC - Big Employers (11 or more)	\$15			
NYC - Small Employers (10 or less)	\$13.50	\$15		
Long Island & Westchester	\$12	\$13	\$14	\$15
Remainder of NYS Workers	\$11.10	\$11.80	\$12.50	*

(*) The minimum wage will continue to increase to \$15 on an indexed schedule to be set by the Director of the Division of Budget in consultation with the Department of Labor.



Laws of 2018

Chapter 462 (Sponsored by M of A Ortiz / Senator Ritchie) -- Requires the office of mental health to develop educational materials for educators regarding suicide prevention.

Chapter 463 (Sponsored by M of A Ortiz / Senator Ortt) -- Relates to the issuance of deer management permits for certain service-connected disabled veterans.

Chapter 465 (Sponsored by M of A Dinowitz / Senator Golden) -- Relates to a prohibition on diversion of funds dedicated to public transportation systems.

Chapter 466 (Sponsored by M of A Magnarelli / Senator DeFrancisco) -- Provides that the official state hymn of remembrance in honor of all American veterans shall be "Here Rests in Honored Glory".

Chapter 475 (Sponsored by Senator Golden/M of A Abbate) -- Authorizes the port authority of New York and New Jersey to offer a certain retirement option to port authority police officers.

Chapter 480 (Sponsored by Senator Funke / M of A Buchwald) -- Relates to prohibiting consumer credit reporting agencies from charging a fee for the placement, removal, or temporary lift of a security freeze following consumer credit reporting agency data breaches.

Chapter 518 (Sponsored by M of A Morelle / Senator Golden) -- Extends the empire state commercial production tax credit.

Chapter 521 (Sponsored by Senator Benjamin / M of A Rosenthal L) -- Requires the MTA to hold public hearings prior to certain transportation facility closures.

Bills Vetoed by the Governor

Veto 333 (Sponsored by M of A Abbate / Senator Lanza) -- Provides for paid time off for port authority of New York and New Jersey police officers who become ill or injured while in the performance of their duties as to necessitate medical or other remedial treatment.

Veto 336 (Sponsored by M of A Peoples-Stokes / Senator DeFrancisco) -- Enacts various provisions relating to procurement procedures.

Veto 338 (Sponsored by M of A Barnwell / Senator Addabbo) -- Establishes a commission to be known as the "New York seawall study commission" which will study the feasibility, costs, impacts, and best locations for construction of a seawall or sea gate being created to protect the city of New York from sea level rise and storm surge along the entire coastline.

Veto 339 (Sponsored by M of A Rosenthal L / Senator Hannon) -- Prohibits pharmacy benefit managers from prohibiting pharmacies from disclosing to consumers the cost of prescription medication, the availability of alternative medications or alternative means of purchasing prescription medications; and prohibits pharmacy benefit managers from collecting copayments from consumers of prescription medications.

Veto 340 (Sponsored by M of A Dinowitz / Senator Ranzenhofer) -- Relates to the minimum requirements for a quorum; there shall be no less than a majority of the total number of members of the commission in order to transact any business, perform any duty or exercise any power.

Veto 341 (Sponsored by M of A Abinanti / Senator Lanza) -- Enacts the "toll payer protection act" to establish a New York toll payers' bill of rights.

Veto 345 (Sponsored by M of A Peoples-Stokes / Senator Ritchie) -- Establishes an additional certification classification for minority and women-owned businesses which are ineligible for certification due to exceeding the personal net worth of small business thresholds.

Veto 346 (Sponsored by Rules (M of A Carroll) / Senator Young) -- Authorizes the commissioner of DMV to require examination of a person involved in an accident caused by a loss of consciousness or awareness.

Veto 354 (Sponsored by Senator Amedore / M of A Bronson) -- Authorizes the care and treatment of injured employees by licensed or certified acupuncturists under the workers' compensation program.

Veto 358 (Sponsored by Senator Avella / M of A Kim) -- Relates to assistance for certain small businesses including dry cleaners and those that practice nail specialty for necessary code related improvements.

Veto 355 (Sponsored by Senator Ranzenhofer / M of A Kim) -- Relates to damages to contracts occasioned by delay.

Veto 366 (Sponsored by Senator Golden / M of A Abbate) -- Relates to accidental disability retirement for deputy sheriffs; provides that deputy sheriffs shall receive a pension of three-quarters of their final average salary.

Veto 371 (Sponsored by Senator Phillips / M of A Abbate) -- Relates to providing accidental disability retirement benefits for chief fire marshals, assistant chief fire marshals, division supervising fire marshals, supervising marshals, fire marshals and fire marshal trainees in Nassau county.

Veto 372 (Sponsored by Senator Funke / M of A Morelle) -- Authorizes paid family leave for bereavement beginning in 2020.

Veto 436 (Sponsored by Rules (M of A Carroll) / Senator Young) -- Authorizes the commissioner of DMV to require examination of a person involved in an accident caused by a loss of consciousness or awareness.

In the News – City



Traffic Fatalities Drop for Fifth Straight Year

Motor Vehicle Occupant Deaths Fall, while Pedestrian Deaths Increase

The number of traffic deaths in New York City dropped in 2018 to the lowest level in more than a century. The boroughs of Manhattan and Staten Island also reached record fatality lows in 2018.

The total number of people killed in traffic crashes in New York City fell to 200 last year, down from 222 deaths in 2017 and the lowest level since the City began recording statistics in 1910.

Pedestrian deaths, however, which account for the largest share of traffic fatalities, increased last year to 114, from 107 in 2017. Motor vehicle occupant fatalities have fallen to 36 from a total of 58 last year.

Among cyclists, fatalities have seen a dramatic decline: 10 compared to 24 in 2017 — from a four-year average of 19 deaths since 2014. The City's installed over 20 miles of protected bike lanes in 2018, expanding the City's bicycle network to 1,200 miles.

By borough, Manhattan and Staten Island have seen the most notable fatality declines in 2018. Manhattan had a record low 27 fatalities compared to 45 in 2017; its previous record low was 28 in 2015. The borough of Staten Island also saw its fewest-ever fatalities: 6, down from 15 in 2017, and less than the previous record low, 11, in 2014. Hylan Boulevard, which was the site of eight traffic fatalities in one 12-month period during 2014-15, has been the intense focus of DOT safety improvements and NYPD enforcement. In 2018, Hylan Boulevard saw a single traffic fatality.

In addition, as part of ongoing Vision Zero enforcement, NYPD Traffic officers issued more than 50,000 summonses to drivers who failed to yield to pedestrians or cyclists in 2018 -- more than four times the pre-Vision Zero annual average. Over the same period, officers issued nearly 150,000 speeding summonses, and automated speed cameras issued nearly 1 million Notices of Liability in 2018, with more than 50% issued at Vision Zero Priority Locations.



January 1st Marks Start of NYC's Styrofoam Ban

The City's ban on styrofoam products went into effect January 1st. Food service establishments, stores, and manufacturers may not possess, sell, or offer for use single service Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) foam food service articles or loose fill packaging, such as "packing peanuts."

There is a six-month grace period, January 1st through June 30th, before fines can be imposed. During the six-month warning period, businesses that still use foam products may receive a "warning card" reminding them of the ban and directing them to DSNY outreach resources.

Non-profits and small businesses with less than \$500,000 in revenue per year may apply for hardship exemptions from the Department of Small Business Services if they can prove that the purchase of alternative products not composed of EPS would create undue financial hardship. Waivers granted will be valid for a one-year period beginning July 1, 2019 and on a rolling basis.

Who is Covered:

- For-profit or not-for-profit: food service establishments, mobile food commissaries, and stores that sell or use foam items.
- Manufacturers and distributors of polystyrene foam packaging that are located or operate within any of the five boroughs of New York City.

What is Covered:

- Single-service foam items including cups, bowls, plates, takeout containers and trays.
- Foam loose fill packaging, commonly known as "packing peanuts."

What is Not Covered:

- Foam containers used for prepackaged food that have been filled and sealed prior to receipt by the food service establishment, mobile food commissary, or store.
- Foam containers used to store raw meat, pork, fish, seafood or poultry sold from a butcher case or similar appliance.
- Foam blocks used as protective packaging in shipping.

EPS is already banned in cities across the country, including Washington, DC, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Oakland, Portland, Albany, and Seattle. In total, more than seventy cities have banned foam and businesses large and small have shifted to alternative products that are biodegradable or otherwise recyclable.

Briefs

New York Public Service Commission to Investigate Con Edison Electrical Failure in Queens

Utility Regulator Will Examine Root Cause of Failure of Power Equipment that Caused Significant Community Safety Concerns and Power Outages

Governor Andrew Cuomo called for the New York State Public Service Commission to investigate the cause behind a major electrical failure at a Con Edison substation in Astoria, Queens on December 27th. While the incident did not cause any significant injuries or apparently result in damage to personal property, it did raise questions about the safety of the substation and Con Edison equipment while also disrupting operations at LaGuardia Airport, the No. 7 subway line of the MTA and the city's prison system at Rikers Island, which had to switch to back-up generators.

Governor Cuomo's L Train Plan

Governor Andrew Cuomo this week convened an expert panel to present recommendations for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA) L Train Tunnel project which determined that a closure of the L Train Tunnel is unnecessary. The MTA accepted the panel's recommendations, which included a series of innovative engineering methods to streamline the required repair work and limit the impact on L Train service. Work could be completed on nights and weekends only, with a single tube providing continued service in both directions during work periods. Last month, Governor Cuomo toured the L Train's Canarsie Tunnel with the engineering experts, including leadership from Cornell University's College of Engineering and Columbia University's Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science.

The Governor has called for an emergency meeting of the MTA Board to review the proposal.

NaturalizeNY Program Assisted Record-Breaking 6,100 New Yorkers Seeking Naturalization in 2018

Individuals from Over 100 Countries Applied to NaturalizeNY in 2018

The NaturalizeNY program - the public-private partnership to encourage eligible immigrants in New York State in becoming U.S. citizens - set a new engagement record in 2018 with 6,100 New Yorkers seeking naturalization. The program offered vouchers to cover naturalization fees this year to more than half of the 1,400 eligible lottery applicants from across the world, and another 4,700 individuals were introduced to the federal fee waiver program.

This year, individuals from more than 100 countries across the world applied for the program, with 428 applicants from the Dominican Republic, 114 from Ecuador and 89 from Colombia registering for the lottery.

NaturalizeNY has covered naturalization costs for 1,684 low-income immigrants since 2016. As in previous years, eligible applicants are entered into a lottery for a voucher to cover the \$725 naturalization application fee. Via Governor Cuomo's Office for New Americans, NaturalizeNY also provides free comprehensive support through the naturalization process, including eligibility screenings, application assistance, naturalization exam preparation, and federal fee waiver application assistance. The program offered vouchers to 768 eligible applicants in 2018.

Julie Menin Appointed as Director of the Census for NYC and Executive Assistant Corporation Counsel for Strategic Advocacy

Mayor Bill de Blasio has appointed Julie Menin as Director of the Census for New York City. She also will serve as Executive Assistant Corporation Counsel for Strategic Advocacy. In her new roles, Menin will organize outreach efforts to encourage every New York City resident to participate in the upcoming 2020 Census. As Executive Assistant Corporation Counsel for Strategic Advocacy, Menin has been tasked to pursue strategies to protect New Yorkers who may be hurt by federal actions, including exploring avenues for litigation, legislation and rule-making.

The Mayor also charged Deputy Mayor J. Phillip Thompson to oversee and lead the Administration's census efforts. Deputy Mayor Thompson also appointed Nisha Agarwal as his Senior Advisor and Jorge Fanjul as his Senior Advisor for DemocracyNYC and Deputy Director of Census Outreach and Organizing.

Mayor de Blasio Signs Legislation Expediting Implementation Of Campaign Finance Reform and Calls for Special Election for Public Advocate on February 26th

Mayor Bill de Blasio this week signed Intro. 1288 which allows candidates currently running in special elections to choose between two public financing options. Candidates can access the current system, which allows a maximum contribution of \$2,550 from each New York City resident. The City will match the first \$175 six to one. Candidates may also have access to a second option that caps donations at \$1,000 per New York City resident, but provides an eight-to-one match on the first \$250.

New Yorkers voted for this reform in the 2018 General Election, however it would not have gone into effect until 2021. The Mayor also signed a formal proclamation setting the date - February 26, 2019 - for the Special Election for Public Advocate.

NYC Launches Fair Fare Program

Mayor Bill de Blasio and Council Speaker Corey Johnson today announced the details of the City's half-priced MetroCard program for low-income New Yorkers. During the first phase, the City will provide discounted MetroCards to working New Yorkers at or below the federal poverty level who are receiving cash assistance or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits from the New York City Department of Social Services.

Participants can purchase unlimited weekly and monthly passes at a 50 percent discount at MTA vending machines. The cards can be used on any New York City subway or non-express bus. The City is working with the MTA to phase in a pay-per-ride option, which it expects to launch in April.

According to published reports, the Fair Fares half-price MetroCard program will affect 30,000 people in its first phase, with an additional 130,000 residents becoming eligible in April.

Coming Up

New York State

The Legislature is in session Wednesday January 9th

Wednesday January 23rd

Recycling

Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee, Room C, LOB, Albany, 11 a.m.

New York City

Monday January 7th

Committee on Government Operations, Committee Room – 250 Broadway, 16th Floor, 10 a.m.

Wednesday January 9th

Committee on Education, Committee Room – City Hall, 10 a.m.

City Council Stated Meeting, Council Chambers – City Hall, 12 p.m.

Charter Meeting

Thursday December 10th

Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, Committee Room – City Hall, 1 p.m.

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