



# THIS WEEK IN NEW YORK

COVERING NEW YORK & CITY GOVERNMENT

MARCH 29, 2024 EDITION

*"Obstacles don't define us. Rather, it is the unparalleled courage and character of us that defines us as a people. So my confidence in the future is steeped in our glorious past - in the face of adversity, we always persist. We persevere, we prevail." Governor Kathy Hochul*

## We Mourn Another Fallen Hero



**NYPD**



**POLICE OFFICER  
JONATHAN DILLER**

Patrol Borough Queens South  
Community Response Team  
New York City Police Department  
End of Watch March 25, 2024

**Fidelis Ad Mortem**



# *In the News-New York City*



## **NY's Budget Saga Continues**

New York will begin its Fiscal Year 2025 on April 1st under a temporary spending allowance as a budget deal remains elusive. Legislative leaders sent the rank-and-file legislators home today for the Easter holiday while they negotiate the State's spending plan with Governor Kathy Hochul.

Governor Hochul delivered a bill to the Legislature to "temporarily extend the budget deadline until April 4<sup>th</sup>." In addition, the Legislature approved the State's Debt Service budget bill, the first of 10 bills that make up the State budget.

Budget negotiations stalled earlier this week when the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York rejected a "final" proposal from the Real Estate Board of NY (REBNY) to boost New York's affordable housing stock. Eight leaders of the trades—including the New York City District Council of Carpenters, IBEW Local 3, UA Plumbers Local 1, and Teamsters Local 282—called upon the Legislature to weigh in to bring fair wages to the table.

"As members of the Building Trades representing tens of thousands of workers, we rejected their offer because it was a rehash of every flawed policy that existed under the previous 421-a program," they said. "We will not stand for it and just as important: we do not stand alone."

Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie asserted that a housing deal will not happen without a wage deal. The eight union leaders emphasized they do not want an "average" wage policy.

"To be clear, we cannot – and will not – support the creation of a multibillion-dollar taxpayer-funded program that regurgitates the average wage policy – a wage standard that has been proven to be ripe with abuse," the leaders said. "...All REBNY has offered us is scraps and more of the same policies that created this mess in the first place..."



## **Bills Passed Both Houses**



**A2656--Sponsored by AM Walker (Senator Cleare)**--Permits pregnant women to enroll in health insurance during a special enrollment period without penalty.

**A7716A--Sponsored by AM Hyndman (Senator Stavisky)**—Provides that the State Education mail licensee registration applications to licensees who have not renewed their licenses 45 days prior to expiration.

**A8876--Sponsored by AM Pheffer Amato (Senator Jackson)**--Permits individuals within twelve months of meeting the minimum age or educational qualifications for a competitive class civil service role to take the civil service examination for that position.

**S1003A--Senator Hinchey (AM Rozic)**—Requires the Department of Health to maintain on its website a list of all health care facilities with policy-based exclusions and the policy-based exclusions for each health care facility.

**S2271--Senator Liu (AM Vinal)**--Clarifies requirements for acknowledgments, proofs, oaths and affirmations outside of the state.

**S8600 Senator Ramos (AM Lunsford)**--Extends the effectiveness of certain provisions relating to the reciprocity of debarments.



## NYC Casino Licenses Eyed for Late 2025

The State Gaming Commission this week released a timeline for awarding the New York City casino licenses, estimating that the new licenses will not be issued until late 2025.

The new timeline takes into consideration City and State approvals that bidders must secure prior to submitting their proposals. Specifically, the proposals may involve the New York City Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), City Council zoning approvals, community reviews, and the State Environmental Quality Review Assessment.

Commission Executive Director Robert Williams explained that these approvals will take the process into 2025. He does not expect to start accepting applications until the end of the first quarter of 2025 at the earliest, with licenses issues later in the year.

“Staff believes the timeline accommodates the existing statutory requirements and allows sufficient time for local zoning approvals, which will enable the best, most comprehensive plans for commercial casino development,” Williams said.

He also noted that the Metropolitan Transportation Authority did not budget for the license fees until 2026.

Meanwhile, State legislators are frustrated with the speed of the process.

“2026 is just embarrassing. You’re New York state, you can’t figure out three gaming licenses in two years?” Senate Racing Committee Chairman Joseph Addabbo said, in published reports. He is urging Governor Kathy Hochul to speed up the timeline.

# *In the News-New York City*



## **MTA Board Adopts Central Business District Toll Rates**

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Board, in its capacity as the board of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, this week approved the Central Business District toll rates by a vote of 11 to 1.

Passenger vehicles and small commercial vehicles – sedans, SUVs, pick-up trucks, and small vans – paying with a valid E-ZPass will be charged \$15 during the day and \$3.75 at night, when there is less congestion, to enter the congestion relief zone in Manhattan below 60th Street. They will be charged no more than once a day.

Trucks and some buses will be charged a toll of \$24 or \$36 during the day to enter the congestion relief zone in Manhattan below 60th Street, depending on their size and function, and \$6 or \$9 at night. The toll for motorcycles will be \$7.50 during the day and \$1.75 at night. Yellow taxi, green cab and black car passengers will pay a \$1.25 toll for every trip to, from, within or through the zone; customers of app-based for-hire vehicles will pay \$2.50.

Qualifying authorized emergency vehicles and qualifying vehicles carrying people with disabilities will be exempt, as will school buses contracted with the NYC Department of Education, buses providing scheduled commuter services open to the public, commuter vans licensed with the NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission, and specialized government vehicles.

As previously proposed, a 50% discount will be available for low-income vehicle owners and a tax credit is available for low-income residents of the Central Business District.

Customers will be able to use their E-ZPass tags to pay the Congestion Relief Zone toll. Those without an E-ZPass tag will receive a bill by mail to the registered owner of the vehicle. Without an E-ZPass, tolls will generally be 50% higher than the listed rate.

According to the MTA, in the first 60 days of the program, drivers will only be charged the applicable Congestion Relief Zone toll. No additional fees, charges, or fines, such as late fees, will be applied.



## **Mayor Adams Signs Legislation Extending City's Rent Stabilization Laws & Honoring Late Public Servant Paul Vallone**

New York City Mayor Eric Adams this week signed two pieces of legislation – one to extend the New York City Rent Stabilization Law of 1969 and another honoring late public servant Paul A. Vallone by naming the Animal Care Centers (ACC) of NYC facility in Queens the "Paul A. Vallone Queens Animal Care Center."

In response to the City Department of Housing and Preservation Development's (HPD) Housing Vacancy Survey, Intro. 0653-A, extends the city's rent stabilization law to April 1, 2027.

Intro. 0001-B honors public servant Paul Vallone – who passed away on January 28, 2024, and served as deputy commissioner for external affairs at the New York City Department of Veterans Services (DVS) and previously represented District 19 in Queens in the New York City Council – by naming an ACC location in Queens after him. As a councilmember, Vallone was a champion for animal welfare and advocated for improving the conditions for animals in New York City.

## ***Briefs***

### **New York State Senate Confirms Appointments to the Public Service Commission**

New York State Senate yesterday confirmed Uchenna Bright and Denise Sheehan to serve as commissioners of the New York State Public Service Commission. They were nominated earlier this year by Governor Kathy Hochul to replace Commissioners John Howard and Diane Burman.

Bright previously worked at the Natural Resources Defense Council for seven years in various roles and has been with a business group supporting environmental policies, Environmental Entrepreneurs, since 2020. She's the eastern advocate for the group with a focus on New York and Pennsylvania.

Sheehan previously served for 10 years at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) in senior management positions, including two years as Commissioner, where she led efforts to establish the nation's first cap-and-trade program for carbon emissions, known as the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. In addition, she serves as a Senior Advisor to the New York Battery and Energy Storage Technology Consortium (NY-BEST).

## **Comptroller DiNapoli: Percentage of New Yorkers With Mental Illness Rose as Available Psychiatric Beds Declined**

State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli this week released a [report](#) that detailed the rise of behavioral health needs among New Yorkers.

Specifically, according to federal data, the mental health needs of New Yorkers have greatly increased, with 21.1% of adults struggling with mental illness and 5.1% with a severe mental illness in 2021-2022. Between 2013 and 2022, there was a 23% increase in the number of individuals served by the state's public mental health system, with nearly 900,000 residents utilizing the services.

According to a report by State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli, the rising need for mental health services coincided with a loss of 990 beds, a 10.5% drop in capacity, in inpatient psychiatric facilities statewide between April 2014 and December 2023.

Incidences of any mental illness (AMI) were especially high among 18 to 25-year-olds at 30%. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), AMI encompasses all recognized mental illnesses and is defined as a mental, behavioral or emotional disorder that can vary in impact, ranging from no impairment to mild, moderate and even severe impairment. The definition does not include developmental and substance use disorders.

The estimated occurrence of serious mental illness (SMI) among New York adults aged 18 and older was nearly 5.1% in 2021-2022, or about 783,000 individuals. SMI is defined by NIMH as a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder resulting in serious functional impairment, which substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities. For individuals between 18 and 25 years of age the rate was 8.6%.

New York's rates were below the national average of 23.1% of adults with AMI and 6% with SMI.

## **Free Admission to State Parks, Lands, Campgrounds, and Historic Sites for New York State Veterans and Gold Star Families**

Beginning on Monday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, New York State veterans and Gold Star Families will have free access to New York State parks, campgrounds, day use areas, historic sites, and recreation areas through the expansion of the Lifetime Liberty Pass Program.

Under the legislation signed by Governor Hochul, the Lifetime Liberty Pass Program will now be extended to include all Veterans and certain Gold Star Family members who are residents of New York State. A disability rating is no longer required.

The benefits include:

- Free vehicle entry to State Parks and Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)-operated campgrounds and day use areas, as well as state boat launch sites, historic sites, arboretums, and park preserves.

- Free greens fees at State Park-operated golf courses.
- Free swimming pool entrance at pools operated by State Parks.
- Discounted campsite and cabin rentals at State Parks- and DEC-operated campgrounds. The discount will be applied at the time of campground check-in.

New York State Gold Star Parents, Spouses or Children should [apply for the free Lifetime Liberty Pass](#) to ensure entry at all park locations. The application process for the Lifetime Liberty Pass will open on April 1, 2024.

## **NYC Releases Requirements, Opens Permit Applications for Autonomous Vehicle Testing**

New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez today released safety requirements for autonomous vehicle (AV) testing in New York City, as well as announced the opening of applications for a new permit program.

Consistent with state law, a trained safety driver will still be required to sit behind the wheel and be ready to take control of an AV-enabled vehicle at all times. As part of the approval process, applicants must:

- Submit information on their previous testing experience and technological capabilities, a detailed testing plan for New York City, and a safety plan.
- Obtain approval from the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles before starting an on-street testing program.
- Provide details on how their test operators are selected and trained, and attest that they will follow recent best practices from the Society of Automotive Engineers.
- Certify that the vehicles will follow all traffic laws and curb regulations and include safety assurance protocols for how the operator will compensate for any AV system limitation or failure and proactively intervene to avoid potential crashes.
- Certify that they are adhering to industry best practices related to cybersecurity.
- Provide a detailed overview of the level of automation and safety performance of their AV technology, including previous testing and crash histories of their AV technology.
- Provide a list of all current or past permits to test their technology in any local, state, or foreign government agency.

The State statute which allows the State Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to authorize demonstrations and tests of autonomous vehicle technology expires on Monday, April 1<sup>st</sup>. The Executive Budget included a provision to extend the authorization to 2026, as did the Assembly Budget Resolution. The Senate proposed extending the authorization to 2029.

## **Mayor Adams Launches Effort to Connect More New Yorkers to Jobs and Training**

New York City Mayor Eric Adams this week announced “[Jobs NYC](#),” a citywide effort to deliver workforce development services directly to communities that are experiencing high unemployment.

The effort will focus on three initiatives: 1) revamping the administration's "hiring halls" in an effort to bring public and private job opportunities and career services to economically-disadvantaged communities on a monthly basis in each borough, 2) launching a new [Jobs.nyc.gov](https://jobs.nyc.gov) talent portal to connect New Yorkers to job and training opportunities, and 3) continuing to reform the city's Minimum Qualification Requirements to make certain entry-level jobs within city government are more accessible.

In June 2023, Mayor Adams removed the bachelor's degree requirement for certain city jobs.

## **Mayor Adams, NYPD Commissioner Caban to Pilot new Technology, Announce Additional Clinicians to be Deployed in Subways**

New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Police Department (NYPD) Commissioner Edward A. Caban today announced efforts to make the Metropolitan Transit Authority's (MTA) subway system safer by investing in new technology to detect firearms, as well as invest in more clinicians that will help those suffering from severe mental illness in the nation's largest subway system.

According to the Mayor, the city is exploring, and will soon begin piloting, technologies designed to detect weapons carried by travelers into the transit system. In accordance with the Public Oversight of Surveillance Technology (POST) Act, the NYPD also published online its Impact and Use Policy for electromagnetic weapons detection systems, starting a mandatory 90-day waiting period before new technology can be tested and used in New York City.

Additionally, Mayor Adams announced that the city will begin hiring clinicians to support the expansion of the Subway Co-Response Outreach Teams (SCOUT). This pilot program was launched in partnership with the state and the MTA to connect people with untreated severe mental illness in the subways to mental health treatment and care.

# ***Coming Up***

## ***New York State***

***Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>***

*New York State Senate Session, 3 p.m.*

*New York State Assembly Session, 2 p.m. (Wednesday and Thursday are TBA)*

***Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>***

*New York State Senate Session, 3 p.m.*

***Thursday, April 4<sup>th</sup>***

*New York State Senate Session, 11 a.m.*



## *New York City*

*Tuesday, April 2nd*

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

*Wednesday, April 3rd*

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

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

*Thursday, April 4th*

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



---

**Disclaimer:** The materials in this *This Week in New York* report are provided for informational purposes only and are not intended to be a comprehensive review of legislative or governmental or political developments, to create a client-consultant/lobbyist relationship, or to provide consulting, lobbying or political advice. Readers are cautioned not to attempt to solve specific problems on the basis of information contained in this *This Week in New York*. If consulting, lobbying or government relations advice is required, please consult a professional expert in such matters.

---

The information contained herein, does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC, or any of its members or employees or its clients. Neither Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC, nor its members or employees make any warranty, expressed or implied, and assume no legal liability with respect to the information in this report, and do not guarantee that the information is accurate, complete, useful or current. Accordingly, Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC is not responsible for any claimed damages resulting from any alleged error, inaccuracy, or omission.

This communication may be considered an advertisement or solicitation. To request that copies of this publication be sent to a new address or fax number, to unsubscribe, or to comment on its contents, please contact Theresa Cosgrove at [tcosgrove@pittabishop.com](mailto:tcosgrove@pittabishop.com) or at (518) 449-3320.

**To Our Clients:** If you have any questions regarding any of the matters addressed in this newsletter, or regarding any legislative, government relations or political or consulting or related issues in general, please contact the Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC professional with whom you usually work.

*This Week in New York* is a publication of Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC.

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

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

**1220 19th Street NW, St. 600  
Washington, D.C. 20036**  
Telephone (202) 964-4753  
Facsimile (202) 964-5754