



THIS WEEK IN NEW YORK

COVERING NEW YORK & CITY GOVERNMENT

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“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

In the News-New York State



New York Leaders & Uniformed Forces Unite to Honor Fallen Officers at Annual Remembrance Ceremony

New York State held its annual Remembrance Ceremony in Albany this week, honoring 68 police officers from seven departments who sacrificed their lives in service to their fellow New Yorkers.

The officers' names have been added to the New York State Police Officers Memorial at the Empire State Plaza in Albany. The black granite walls of the memorial now include the names of [1,840 police officers](#) from 152 agencies across the state, and six federal agencies.



More than 300 law enforcement professionals, family members and friends attended the ceremony, during which Governor Kathy Hochul offered remarks. This is the first year that the names of fire marshals from the Fire Department of the City of New York have been added to the memorial; state law defines FDNY fire marshals as police officers.

“Our law enforcement officers put their lives on the line every time they put on their uniforms in service to their communities – today we honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice,” Governor Hochul said. “We honor 68 police officers who paid the ultimate price to keep us safe. Our hearts are with their loved ones as we remember them and their unwavering commitment to serve the State of New York.”



Teamsters Weigh in On State Packaging Bill

*Asserts Extended Producers Responsibility (EPR) Legislation
(A5322B/S4246B) is a
Direct Assault on Organized Labor*

An end of session legislative push to pass the *Packaging reduction and recycling infrastructure Act* has brought organized labor to the forefront of the environmental law debate.

Sponsored by Senator Pete Harkham and Deborah Glick, chairs of the respective legislative Environmental Conservation committees, the Packaging Reduction Act seeks to establish an EPR program for packaging. The program would be paid for via participation fees, based on a fee schedule for producers promulgated by the state Department of Environmental Conservation. Under the legislation, shippers of packaged materials (such as Amazon or FedEx) are defined as responsible producers.

In New York State, several EPR laws are already in effect for electronics, rechargeable batteries, mercury thermostats, pharmaceuticals, and paint. The Teamsters' concerns over these programs were addressed and in many areas, the Teamsters' members work in concert with municipalities on the programs.

The proposed packaging EPR legislation however, according to the Teamsters, goes beyond the current programming to threaten the collection services—and the workers who perform the services – currently afforded to municipalities.

“This legislation is a direct assault on organized labor,” according to a memo in opposition submitted by Teamsters Joint Councils 16, 18 and 46. “It creates a grand scheme to change the collection of certain municipal waste from an obligation of local governments to a system controlled by not-for-profit (“NFP”) entities reporting to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.”

Under the provisions of the bill, the NFP's will be charged with imposing a tax structure on those who produce or ship packaging materials into the State intended to pay for the collection of the resulting waste material. The NFP's and their advisory Boards have no representatives of labor and, in fact, no governmental employees. Municipalities are authorized to surrender the collection of discarded packaging, and certain other defined materials to the producer.

In short, the Teamsters assert, this legislation would allow municipal waste removal forces, both public employee and currently contracted private companies, to be replaced by a State supervised private collection force without any regard to workers' rights.

At a minimum, the Teamsters assert that the legislation must be amended to:

- Provide assurance that current employees will not be displaced.
- Include labor leaders representing the current work force on the various advisory committees.
- Require that all entities engaged in such work have labor peace agreements with their employees.
- Ensure that municipalities cannot be allowed to void their public health obligation of dealing with municipal solid waste.

Representatives of the Joint Councils have reached out to Senator Harkham, Assemblymember Glick, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, and Governor Kathy Hochul to address the organized labor threat created by the current draft of the EPR legislation.

In the News-New York City



Mayor Adams Initiates *Operation to Shut Down Unlicensed Smoke and Cannabis Shops Across Five Boroughs*

New York City Mayor Eric Adams this week announced the start of a five-borough operation — that will accelerate in the coming weeks — to shut down unlicensed smoke and cannabis shops in the City of New York.

As part of the FY2025 State Budget, municipalities were given the regulatory authority by the state to shut down the illegal shops. The [city established formal rules](#) allowing the New York City’s Sheriff Office — along with other local law enforcement agencies — to padlock smoke and cannabis shops without a license.

Mayor Adams, New York City Sheriff Anthony Miranda, the New York City Police Department (NYPD), and the New York City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) kicked off “Operation Padlock to Protect,” giving law enforcement the ability to inspect smoke and cannabis shops and padlock those caught unlawfully selling cannabis.

To padlock a shop, the sheriff can point to any of the “imminent threats” already listed in the state’s cannabis law, such as evidence that the store sold cannabis to minors or carried unlicensed products. The city is also adding its own new restrictions: a cannabis shop can be considered an “imminent threat” if it is within 1,000 feet of a school or house of worship, according to the new rules — a bigger range than the 200-foot limit that the state imposes on legal cannabis retailers.

Other provisions in the new state budget will subject landlords to a \$50,000 fine if they fail to start eviction proceedings after being warned they are renting to an illicit shop. The budget also empowers the state's Office of Cannabis Management to padlock businesses immediately after an inspection if they are found to be selling illicit products or peddling to minors.

"Today, our administration is delivering on a promise to shut down unlicensed smoke and cannabis shops, protect our young people, and ensure that the future of legal cannabis burns bright in New York City," said Mayor Adams. "Thanks to Governor Kathy Hochul and our partners in the state Legislature, New York City is now using the full force of the law across every borough to padlock and protect our streets. Legal cannabis remains the right choice for our city, but to those who choose to break the law — we will shut you down."

Comptroller DiNapoli: New York City's Government Workforce Expected to Increase for First Time Since Pandemic

New York City's full-time government workforce is expected to increase for the first-time year-over-year since the COVID-19 pandemic, [according to a report](#) released this week by State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli. The city is projected to end the 2024 Fiscal Year (FY) in June with at least 283,000 full-time employees, up from 281,917 workers in June 2023.

"The COVID-19 pandemic upended New York city's public workforce," Comptroller DiNapoli said. "The city has worked to stabilize its labor force and fill critical vacancies, while holding down costs. Staffing remains below pre-pandemic levels, but the city should end the fiscal year with its first increase in headcount since the beginning of the pandemic."

City staffing remains down approximately 5% when compared to pre-pandemic employment of 300,446 employees in FY 2020. A general hiring freeze was in effect from October 2023 through February 2024 as part of the city's Program to Eliminate the Gap, but staffing has reached 284,330, an increase of 2,413 employees as of January 2024.

According to the Comptroller, staffing still remains uneven across city agencies, with some still experiencing higher turnover or vacancies since last year. For instance, the Department of Probation's turnover has increased 128.6% compared to its pre-pandemic average of vacancies, while the Department of Buildings' turnover increased 68.3% and the Fire Department increased 52%.

As a result of uneven turnover, Comptroller DiNapoli explained, some categories of government jobs experienced higher percentage declines. The largest declines included public safety jobs like police and correction officers, dispatchers, construction inspectors, and protective service workers, consisting mostly of school safety agents. Also, administrative support roles like executive assistants, clerks and assistants to higher education officers saw greater declines. In total, 24 of 71 major occupations in the city saw staff declines since December of 2022 while others like fire inspectors, biological and life scientists, and customer service representatives increased.

The city has been accelerating hiring since the pandemic and has increased civil service exams and outreach to potential applicants through the city's online job hub. The Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) reported that the number of applications received for all DCAS civil service exams increased, from 75,489 in FY 2021, to 119,599 in FY 2023, with DCAS also reporting that the number of employment applications received via the city's online job hub has nearly doubled over two years to 736,011 in FY 2023.

Comptroller DiNapoli noted that some agencies are using overtime to address staffing challenges, and overtime has grown to \$1.8 billion through March 2024 of FY 2024, compared to \$1.1 billion through the same period in FY 2021. While overtime growth is mostly driven by uniform agencies, others like the Administration for Children's Services and the Human Resources Administration have increased overtime spending significantly when compared to the pre-pandemic years.

The Comptroller warned that while overtime may be used in the short-term, such spending was not anticipated at the time of budget adoption, creating gaps that must be closed by generating revenue or reductions in planned spending.

Briefs

New York awards first \$3.6M of public campaign funds.

The State Public Campaign Finance Board this week approved payments to 30 Assembly and seven state Senate candidates, the first payments of the State's public financing program.

The New York State Public Campaign Finance Program provides candidates running for statewide or state legislative office the ability to qualify for public matching funds based on small donations from residents in their district. 2024 marks the first year where candidates for state legislative office can receive public matching funds for their campaign.

Candidates will receive a combined \$3.6 million. The candidates will be issued money by the state Comptroller's Office next week and three additional rounds of payments are due to go about before the June 25 primary for state legislative races.

Candidates who hit certain fundraising thresholds are eligible to receive a state match of as much as \$12 for every \$1 raised from donors who gave \$250 or less. Assembly hopefuls can receive up to \$175,000, while Senate candidates can get \$375,000.

In February, the Board announced it had 316 participating candidates in the Program for the 2024 State Senate and State Assembly elections.

NY Launches Climate Action Pilot Program to Help New York Hospitals Achieve Net-Zero Carbon Emissions by 2050

Governor Kathy Hochul this week launched a [voluntary climate action pilot program](#) for hospitals, focused on improving worker health and safety while addressing the harmful impacts of climate change on the environment.

The program provides premium credits of up to \$1 million to New York State Insurance Fund-insured hospitals that pledge to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and enhance their resilience to extreme weather events.

The pilot provides NYSIF's hospital policyholders an upfront credit of 5 percent on their workers' compensation premium, up to \$1 million per policy, when they pledge to develop a climate action plan. According to the Governor, the upfront credit will free up funds immediately for hospitals to develop their action plans, laying the foundation for their future emissions reduction and resilience strategies. An ongoing premium credit of 5 percent, up to \$1 million per policy, will be available to hospitals each year they progress toward their planned milestones.

NYS Office Of General Services Transitions To All Online Auctions For State Surplus Vehicles And Highway Equipment

New York State Office of General Services (OGS) Commissioner Jeanette Moy announced New York State's transition to all online auctions for the sale of state surplus vehicles and highway equipment. The change adds vehicles to the government surplus items already being sold on the [GovDeals State of New York](#) auction marketplace.

The GovDeals State of New York auction marketplace site inventory changes daily. It features a wide range of state surplus items, including office supplies and furniture, lockers, technology, storage cabinets, electrical tools, power equipment, and plumbing and electrical supplies.

Visitors to the online auction marketplace are required to [preregister](#) before they can start bidding on surplus items. Registration is free.

Mayor Adams Completes Rollout of Composting in all New York City Public Schools

The Adams Administration has completed its expansion of composting to every New York City public school, three months ahead of schedule. All 1,150 New York City public schools are now composting their food waste — putting their orange peels, uneaten pizza crusts, compostable food trays - to beneficial use for the City.

New York City schools generate more than 80 million pounds of refuse per year, over 47 percent of which is food waste and food-soiled paper. Additionally, since the curbside composting program was expanded to include all rodent mitigation zone schools in the Bronx last school year, there has been a 38 percent decrease in active rat signs.

The program was launched in January 2022.

Coming Up

New York State

Monday, May 13th

New York State Senate Session, 3 p.m.

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

Senate Ethics and Internal Governance Committee Meeting, 124 CAP, 12 p.m.

Senate Housing, Construction, and Community Development Committee Meeting, 512 LOB, 11 a.m.

Senate Disabilities Committee Meeting, 945 LOB, 11 a.m.

Senate Cities 2 Committee Meeting, 804 LOB, 11:30 a.m.

Senate Investigations and Government Operations Committee Meeting, 816 LOB, 12 p.m.

Tuesday, May 14th

New York State Senate Session, 3 p.m.

Senate Aging Committee Meeting, 904 LOB, 9 a.m.

Senate Judiciary Committee Meeting, 124 CAP, 10 a.m.

Senate Education Committee Meeting, 510 LOB, 10 a.m.

Senate Budget and Revenue Committee Meeting, 123 CAP, 10:15 a.m.

Senate Consumer Protection Committee Meeting, 901 LOB, 10:30 a.m.

Senate Children and Families Committee Meeting, 124 CAP, 11 a.m.

Senate Finance Committee Meeting, 124 CAP, 11 a.m.

Senate Civil Service and Pensions Committee Meeting, 123 CAP, 12 p.m.

Senate Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation Meeting, 123 CAP, 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 15th

Senate Committee on Labor Public Hearing:

To hear from the New York State Workers Compensation Board, experts in workers compensation, workers compensation lawyers, labor partners, and injured workers on the current state of workers compensation and to bring light to areas for improvement,
Van Buren Hearing Room A, 10 a.m.

Senate Codes Committee Meeting, 124 CAP, 10 a.m.

Senate Elections Committee Meeting, 123 CAP, 10:30 a.m.

Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee Meeting, 124 CAP, 11 a.m.

Senate Health Committee Meeting, 124 CAP, 12 p.m.

New York City

Monday, May 13th

Committee on Health, Council Chambers – City Hall, 9:30 a.m.

Committee on Finance, Council Chambers – City Hall, 9:30 a.m.

Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addiction, Council Chambers – City Hall,
9:30 a.m.

Committee on Hospitals, Council Chambers – City Hall, 12 p.m.

Tuesday, May 14th

Committee on Finance, Council Chambers – City Hall, 9:30 a.m.

Committee on Housing and Buildings, Council Chambers – City Hall, 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, May 15th

Committee on Education, Council Chambers – City Hall, 9:30 a.m.

Committee on Finance, Council Chambers – City Hall, 9:30 a.m.

Committee on Higher Education, Council Chambers – City Hall, 12:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 16th

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

City Council Stated Meeting, Council Chambers, 1:30 p.m.

Friday, May 17th

Committee on Criminal Justice, Council Chambers – City Hall, 9:30 a.m.

Committee on Finance, Council Chambers – City Hall, 9:30 a.m.

Committee on Aging, Council Chambers – City Hall, 12:30 p.m.

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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