



# 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*



### **Governor Hochul Announces Judicial Appointments**

#### *Appointments made to the New York State Supreme Court - Appellate Division, Second Judicial Department*

"Our courts must be led by qualified, fair and impartial jurists," **Governor Hochul said.** "With decades of legal experience and deep knowledge of the law, these three judges will be tremendous additions to the appellate division."

The appointments include: **Hon. Donna Marie Golia, Hon. Phillip Hom and Hon. James McCormack**

**Hon. Donna-Marie E. Golia** was serving as Administrative Judge for Criminal Matters, State Supreme Court, Queens County. Judge Golia joined the New York State bench in 2013, upon her election to the New York City Civil Court, Queens County. Initially assigned to the New York City Criminal Court, Queens County, she later sat on the bench in Civil Court, Queens County. She was designated an Acting Supreme Court Justice in 2016, handling matrimonial and other matters in addition to managing a Civil Court calendar.

From 2018 to 2019, she served as Supervising Judge, New York City Civil Court, Queens County, working with the Administrative Judge in overseeing the Court's day-to-day management. Judge Golia was elected to the State Supreme Court, Queens County, in 2020, serving in both the Court's Civil and Criminal Terms. In January 2021, she was appointed an Associate Justice of the Appellate Term, Second Department for the Second, Eleventh and Thirteenth Judicial Districts, hearing appeals from the lower civil and criminal courts in Kings, Queens and Richmond counties, in addition to presiding over matters in State Supreme Court, Queens County.

Prior to becoming a judge, Judge Golia served as a court attorney referee and before that as a principal law clerk in Surrogate's Court, Queens County. Previously, she worked as an assistant district attorney in the Queens County District Attorney's Office where, over the course of her 11-year tenure, she served in various bureaus, including the Office's Homicide Investigations, Narcotics Trial, Appeals and Special Victims bureaus. Judge Golia is a graduate of City University of New York Law School at Queens College. Among her professional associations, she is a member of the Queens County Women's Bar

Association and the Columbian Lawyers Association, and an advisory board member and co-chair of the membership committee of the Judges and Lawyers Breast Cancer Alert (JALBCA). She has developed and presented judicial and other training programs on ADR and other topics.

**Justice Phillip Hom** was elected to the Queens Civil Court in 2017 and to the New York State Supreme Court in 2019. He is a native New Yorker and a proud product of New York's public schools, graduating from the Bronx High School of Science and SUNY-Binghamton with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. Justice Hom received a J.D., cum laude, from the University of Minnesota Law School. While in law school, he worked as a law clerk at the Hennepin County Public Defender's office.

Justice Hom returned to New York after law school working in private practice and the public sector in all three branches of government. He started his legal career at a New York law firm specializing in commercial litigation. In 1997, he began his government service as an agency attorney for the New York City Department of Social Services, where he prosecuted civil claims for the recovery of public assistance and Medicaid.

In 2002, Justice Hom became the Chief of Staff for the first Asian American elected to the New York City Council, supervising the Council Member's staff and managing the office budget. He was also the liaison to other elected officials' offices and advised the Council Member and staff on legal matters. In 2003, he became counsel to the New York City Council's Transportation Committee where he wrote local laws and policy reports related to transportation, mass transit and for-hire vehicles. He also helped conduct oversight hearings of the New York City Department of Transportation and the Taxi and Limousine Commission. In 2010, he was promoted to assistant director of the Council's legislative unit, where he supervised staff preparing legislation, policy reports and conducting oversight hearings. After the City Council, Justice Hom worked as Deputy General Counsel in the New York City Comptroller's office.

Before becoming a judge, Justice Hom returned to private practice, working at a law firm advising transportation, technology, banking, municipal and other clients on regulatory, legislative, employment and other matters. At the firm, he also represented clients in adjudications before the New York State Department of Labor, New York State Department of Transportation, the New York City Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings and the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission Administrative Tribunal.

**Justice James McCormack** served as an Associate Justice of the Appellate Term for the Ninth and Tenth – Second Department. He was elected in the general election on November 15, 2015.

Judge McCormack received his Bachelor's degree from New York University in 1982 and his J.D. from Brooklyn Law School in 1985. After law school McCormack worked as an assistant district attorney in Nassau County until 1998. He worked as a private practice attorney at McCormack & McCormack from 1990 to 2005. In 2006, he was elected to the Nassau County Court. He was acting Justice on the Supreme Court 10th Judicial District from 2007 to 2015.

Under the New York State Constitution and Judiciary Law, the Governor has the authority to appoint Justices to each Appellate Division from among those who have been elected as Justices of the Supreme Court. These appointments are not subject to Senate confirmation.

# *In the News-New York City*



NYC Office of the Mayor

## **Mayor Adams Delivers Remarks to New York State Financial Control Board**

***Governor Kathy Hochul Presided over the Fiscal Control Board meeting of August 15, 2024***

Mayor Adams said: "I'm happy to report that the city's fiscal outlook is strong. New York is the safest big city in America. The safest big city in America. And this is true on our streets and in our subway system. When you look at the record level of safety, it is extremely impressive.

Crime overall fell for the seventh consecutive month in July with notable declines in burglaries. And our NYCHA developments are safer today than they were last year. And we have taken over 17,600 illegal guns off the streets since the start of the administration. And launched a \$500 million blueprint to keep communities safe from gun violence, which would have both helped police shooters across the city by double digits, bringing down those shooters. The city has also seen six straight months of double digit drops in several crimes since we directed the NYPD to search offices in the subway system. Going back to the subway safety plan that the governor led us on, and we're seeing true results because of that plan. Aside from the pandemic related issues, major crime in the subways are at the lowest level in 14 years.

And to battle the scourge of illegal cannabis shops, thanks to the powers that we received from the state, our administration's Operation Padlock to Protect has already padlocked over 900 illegal smoke shops and seized nearly \$60 million in illegal products. Crime is down, jobs are up. Don't let anyone tell you anything other than that. Crime down, jobs are up. And if I was in the right setting, I would have us all chant that together, because that's how successful we've been. And I could not be prouder of the jobs in the city. We now have a record high of 4.76 million jobs, nearly 46,000 above the pre-pandemic level. 334,000 of those jobs were created under this administration. And since we took office, something that troubled me from day one, black and brown unemployment was hurting the city.

Black unemployment was almost four times the rate of white unemployment, so we zeroed in on it. We knew that we had to be specific and focused. We decreased black and Hispanic unemployment by close to 30 percent, to 7.3 percent for black unemployment, the lowest figure in half a decade, and 6.5 percent for Latino unemployment.

Our administration has additionally broken the record for the most small businesses in our city's history. The most small businesses in our city's history. On top of historic job and business growth, we are keeping the city more affordable for working class New Yorkers. The earned income tax credit we helped push through Albany has generated \$345 million in tax credits for over 746,000 low to moderate income New Yorkers, especially parents with children. This put an average of \$345 back in the pockets to offset the rising cost of housing, food, and health care.

We are also wiping out \$2 billion in medical debt for qualified low income and severely debt burdened New Yorkers. One of the number one causes of going into bankruptcy is medical debt. We're hitting it straight on and addressing the issue”.



## New York City Council Votes to Approve Bronx Metro-North Stations Rezoning

*Will Help Build 7,000 New Homes in the East Bronx*

The New York City Council voted to approve the Bronx Metro-North Stations rezoning, which will add approximately 7,000 new residential housing units and make historic infrastructure and community investments in the surrounding East Bronx neighborhoods of Parkchester, Van Nest, and Morris Park with forthcoming Metro-North Stations.

The approval is part of a plan to create approximately 7,000 new units of housing amidst a housing and affordability crisis. The plan leverages the new Metro-North service to promote transit-oriented development amidst the city's housing crisis. It will advance economic growth, facilitate the development of housing, including affordable housing, as well secure investment in the public realm around stations to improve accessibility, pedestrian safety and quality of life.

**Speaker Adrienne Adams said:** “The opening of new Metro-North stations in the East Bronx presents a unique opportunity to develop new housing and homeownership opportunities, while delivering critical infrastructure investments that benefit surrounding neighborhoods for generations. This historic neighborhood rezoning, coupled with nearly \$500 million for local infrastructure improvements that the Council secured, will have a lasting positive impact for the residents of the Bronx and our entire city. I thank Majority Leader Farías, Land Use Chair Salamanca, Zoning and Franchises Chair Riley, and Council Member Marmorato for their leadership to get this major rezoning plan across the finish line, and Mayor Adams’ administration for its partnership.”

## *Briefs*

### Mayor Adams Appoints Robert Tucker 35th Fire Commissioner of FDNY

New York City Mayor Eric Adams announced the appointment of Robert S. Tucker, Esq. as the 35th commissioner of the Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY). Tucker currently serves as secretary of the FDNY Foundation and is an honorary fire commissioner of the City of New York. His first job ever was at the FDNY as an intern. Tucker brings decades of additional public safety experience to the role, previously serving as a special assistant to the Queens County district attorney and, most recently, as chairman and CEO of T&M Protection Resources, a globally recognized leader in security solutions and cyber intelligence. As FDNY commissioner, Tucker will oversee the day-to-day administration of the agency's 17,000 employees and a \$2 billion budget. Tucker is the grandson of the

late Richard Tucker who is considered one of the greatest opera tenors of all time. Tucker has been honored by the New York Board of Rabbis and the Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City. He is a graduate of The George Washington University and Pace University School of Law.

## **Department of Consumer and Worker Protection Promulgates More Debt Collector Rules**

As part of an ongoing reshaping of rules regulating Debt Collectors, DCWP has promulgated revised rules set to take effect on December 1, 2024. The Department issued extensive changes related to language access services and records retention in 2020 in an effort to update the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act of 1997. The current changes were first made public in November 2022. After a hearing in December 2022, revisions were released for comment in late September 2023. Oral and written comments were accepted. Changes were made and without further hearings scheduled, the current promulgation was released.

The revised rules generally give consumers great ability to limit communications received from debt collectors. For medical debt, information about the debt cannot be reported to a consumer reporting agency. The new regulations will require the retention of extensive records of debt collector's communication with consumers. Whereas the debtor community has been relatively silent, those merchants who are owed money claim that it will be more difficult to collect what they are owed and that the result will be increased prices for all.

## **Speaker Heastie and Assemblymember McMahan Announce \$1.5 Million for Buffalo Niagara Heritage Village**

Speaker Carl Heastie continued his annual statewide tour today in Amherst with Assemblymember Karen McMahan where they announced \$1.5 million for the Buffalo Niagara Heritage Village. They also visited the North Amherst Fire Company to discuss future community needs.

"Every year on my statewide tour I get to see the amazing things happening in our communities," said Speaker Heastie. "Today, I'm honored Assemblymember McMahan invited me to visit the Buffalo Niagara Heritage Village and meet with the incredible volunteer force at North Amherst Fire Company as they both work to make their community better each and every day". "I want to thank Speaker Heastie for joining us today to discuss the future of the Buffalo Niagara Heritage Village and the North Amherst Fire Company," said Assemblymember McMahan. "I remain committed to ensuring vital community organizations such as these have the funding required to expand their valuable programs and essential services and meet the needs of our growing community."

Speaker Heastie and Assemblymember McMahan visited the Buffalo Niagara Heritage Village, a museum and 35-acre historical campus located in the Town of Amherst. There, they met with Executive Director Dr. Carrie Stiver to discuss the museum's plans to expand the facility with the addition of a new building and exhibits. Speaker Heastie and Assemblymember McMahan announced \$1.5 million to preserve and refresh several historic structures on the property which date back to the 19th century, and to add new exhibits and engagement spaces.

Speaker Heastie and Assemblymember McMahan also visited the North Amherst Fire Department, to meet with President of North Amherst Fire Department Joel Smith. The North Amherst Fire Department is a volunteer fire company serving the mostly rural, northernmost section of Amherst.



**Snapshot of the week:** Governor Kathy Hochul visited St. John's University in Jamaica, Queens this week.

After shooting the round ball a few times and visiting with some students playing ball, the Governor toured the recently completed St. Vincent Health Sciences Center.

The new energy-efficient academic building will feature active learning classrooms, laboratories, simulation facilities, office space, collaborative spaces, and outdoor terraces. It will support and house existing and forthcoming health sciences programs in one facility.

The Governor was greeted by SJU President Father Shanley. Other guests included Queens Boro President Donovan Richards, Senator Toby Stavisky and Assemblymember Nily Rozic.

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