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THIS WEEK IN NEW YORK

COVERING NEW YORK & CITY GOVERNMENT

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"No Man can be a good citizen unless he has a wage more than sufficient to cover the bare cost of living, and hour of labor short enough so that after his day's work is done he will have time and energy to bear his share in the management of the community, to help in carrying the general load" Governor Theodore Roosevelt.

In The News-New York State

General Election: November 3rd

Early Voting Begins October 24th

General Election Contest List Includes: Governor/Lieutenant Governor; State Comptroller; Attorney General; Surrogate, Supreme, & Civil Court Justices; Congressional Representatives & State Legislators



Attorney General James Warns New Yorkers About AI-Generated Election Misinformation Ahead of November Elections

New York Attorney General Letitia James this week released an updated guide to help New Yorkers spot, avoid, and report election misinformation created by artificial intelligence (AI) ahead of the November 3rd general elections.

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) has found that AI chatbots, which answer questions people type into an app or website, can give voters incorrect or outdated information regarding poll site locations, voting deadlines, and voting requirements.

"When New Yorkers head to the polls, they deserve to have accurate information to cast an informed vote," said Attorney General James. "AI has made it easier than ever for bad actors to spread convincing lies about candidates and about when, where, and how to vote, and chatbots can confidently give voters the wrong answer. Before you believe or share anything you see about the election, check it with your board of elections or another trusted source."

Attorney James explained that AI tools can create photos, videos, and audio recordings that appear to show real people saying things they never said or doing things they never did. They can also be made to look like official notices or government messages. Bad actors can use this fake content to mislead voters about candidates, voter eligibility, and where, when, or how to vote.

Under New York law, any political communication that includes seemingly realistic, but AI-generated or otherwise deceptive images, video, or audio must be clearly labeled as manipulated. However, OAG cautions that much of the fake content circulating online is not labeled, and tools that claim to detect AI-generated content are not always accurate. Attorney General James encourages anyone who encounters a voting-related video, image, or audio recording that they suspect to be manipulated and does not include a disclosure to file a complaint.

Misinformation does not only come from AI. The OAG reminds New Yorkers to stay alert for all kinds of false election information, whether it arrives on a postcard, in an email or text, or on a lawn sign.

Attorney General James' guide offers New Yorkers the following tips:

- For information on where, when, or how to vote, and voter eligibility, contact or visit state and local boards of elections' websites. The OAG also operates an Election Protection Hotline during the voting period, which voters can contact to ask questions and file complaints.
- Do not rely on AI chatbots to answer questions about elections or voting.
- Be skeptical of photos, videos, and audio circulating online about elections, candidates, or their campaigns. Be especially careful with content that is emotional, shocking, or surprising. Remember that it may be fake.
- Do not assume something is real just because it looks or sounds real. AI fakes have improved so much that they may have no obvious flaws.
- Do not share content that seems suspicious without confirmation that it is real and accurate.

- ❖ Check any information on elections or voting that comes from unofficial sources, and encourage others to do the same.
- ❖ Be mindful that the information in a phone call about voting or elections may be inaccurate or fake. Remember to verify information with official sources.
- ❖ Report social media content that seems fake to the platform it is on.
- ❖ Report false information about elections or voting, especially about when, where, or how to vote, to the OAG.

Voters experiencing election-related problems can also contact the OAG's Election Protection Hotline at (866) 390-2992 or electionhotline.ag.ny.gov beginning on October 24th.

State Budget Director Releases Annual *Call Letter* Marking the Official Start of the FY2028 Budget Season

State Budget Director Blake Washington officially kicked off New York's FY2028 budget season, calling for the State agency heads to submit budget requests that do "not exceed the total SFY 2027 Enacted Budget agency funding levels, excluding one-time investments."

"Current economic data paints a positive picture, with New York's economy growing faster than any other state in the nation," Washington explained in the call letter. "Tax receipts have been buoyed by stock market updrafts, fueled in large part by the artificial intelligence (AI) investment cycle. But the extent to which this continues is uncertain: as states and local governments continue to examine the environmental, social and economic concerns around the buildout of AI infrastructure, a slowdown of the investment may lead to a cooling of the equities market with an outsized impact on New York State's receipts."

Washington said that the FY2027 budget "delivered for the state workforce" allowing New York to attract and retain the talent necessary to ensure our services and systems are guided with competency. He emphasized that the state contractual spending processes must be monitored to address resulting spending growth and to "otherwise ensure every taxpayer dollar spent results in the most cost-efficient outcome possible."

Agency budget requests for SFY 2028 are due no later than October 28th.

In The News-New York City

BOARD OF ELECTIONS IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Early Voting Starts Saturday, October 24th through November 1st

Early Voting Poll Sites

Manhattan Bronx Brooklyn Queens Staten Island



There are five proposed amendments to the New York City Charter on the ballot this fall. These proposals would change processes for using public space, city contracting, street safety projects, city-owned property and office space, building permits, and the city's financial reserves.

Below are summaries of the five proposals, including what each one would change and what a "Yes" or "No" vote would mean.

Question 1

Proposed Charter Amendment: Speed Up Process for Granting a Revocable Consent to Use Public Space
Simplify process to use public space for uses such as ramps, planters and cafes, by removing mandatory hearings and Council disapproval of sidewalk cafes, while maintaining community and Council input.

"Yes" speeds up process to use public space while maintaining community input. "No" maintains longer process with mandatory public hearing to use public space and Council review of sidewalk cafes.

Question 2

Proposed Charter Amendment: Reduce City Contractor Paperwork; Require Regular Meetings of Procurement Policy Board
Reduce paperwork for City contractors by authorizing Procurement Policy Board to simplify contractor questionnaire. Require quarterly meetings of the Procurement Policy Board. Remove mandatory hearing for required client services report.

"Yes" amends Procurement Policy Board authority, including to simplify contractor questionnaire; authorizes Mayor to delegate certain contract approvals. "No" leaves laws unchanged, with Mayor and Comptroller maintaining longer questionnaire.

Question 3

Proposed Charter Amendment: Speed Up Street Safety Projects, Disposition of Unused City Property, Office Leasing

Simplify review of street safety projects to reduce construction timelines. Fast track disposition of unused City property with approval from City Planning Commission. Expedite leasing offices used for City workforce.

"Yes" simplifies street project approval, City property disposition and office leasing. "No" maintains intra-agency consultation for road projects, Council approval for City property dispositions and Council disapproval of office leases.

Question 4

Proposed Charter Amendment: Simplify Building Permitting and Move Waterfront Permitting to Department of Buildings

Create centralized construction permits hub to simplify permitting. Move waterfront permitting from Department of Small Business Services to Department of Buildings. Allow construction approval by additional Department of Buildings officials.

"Yes" simplifies permitting by authorizing a centralized permitting hub, moving waterfront permitting to Department of Buildings, and allowing additional Department of Buildings officials to issue approvals. "No" leaves laws unchanged.

Question 5

Proposed Charter Amendment: Set Contribution Targets for Rainy Day Fund to Promote Sufficient Budgetary Reserves

Set target amount of money to hold in reserve funds, including rainy day fund, to address unexpected financial hardships in future years, and require development of methodology to calculate contributions.

"Yes" requires Mayor to develop methodology for calculating deposits to rainy day fund, with deposits subject to approval in the City budget. "No" leaves laws unchanged, with no reserves target.

NYC Office of the Mayor

Mamdani Administration Announces *Debt Demolisher*: Relief Program for Small Businesses and Homeowners

Mayor Zohran Mamdani and New York City Department of Finance (DOF) Commissioner Richard Lee announced *Debt Demolisher*, a fine relief program for small businesses and homeowners across the five boroughs. The program will allow eligible New Yorkers to resolve debt accrued from City fines at a reduced cost and avoid future penalties. *Debt Demolisher* will also help the City collect outstanding fines that may have otherwise gone unpaid.

"City government shouldn't saddle New Yorkers with endless fines and interest," said Mayor Mamdani**.** "When the city issues a fine, the goal is to incentivize compliance with the rules that keep all of us safe and healthy, not make it impossible to grow your business or repair your home. Debt Demolisher makes it more affordable for small business owners and homeowners to get back into good standing, move forward and avoid future penalties…"

Under *Debt Demolisher*, New Yorkers with eligible outstanding debt can have accrued interest waived and resolve their debt at a discounted rate. Program participants will be required to come into compliance with outstanding agency violations associated with their judgments. Debt Demolisher is projected to bring in $25 million that would have likely gone otherwise uncollected by the city.

All outstanding ECB judgments are eligible for *Debt Demolisher* except those where any of the below apply:

- It was entered in court (docketed) after July 15, 2026.
- It was included in an agreement with the Sheriff's Office or a New York City Marshal, the corporation counsel or a contractor of the corporation counsel.
- It is for a violation that was issued pursuant to a citizen's complaint, such as for idling or noise violations, served upon a city agency.
- An execution has been issued for enforcement to the Sheriff's Office or a New York City Marshal.
- The violation has been converted to a tax lien.
- The violation is the subject of a criminal investigation.

Debt Demolisher will run through January 10, 2027. New Yorkers can visit ***nyc.gov/debtdemolisher*** to confirm eligibility, review frequently asked questions and resolve eligible judgments.

NYC Office of the Mayor

Mayor Mamdani Directs Comprehensive Review of NYPD Use of Force

Mayor Zohran Mamdani this week directed the New York City Police Department (NYPD) to conduct a comprehensive review of its use-of-force policies and practices. The review will take place over the coming months and include a community engagement process.

In addition to the use-of-force review, the Mamdani administration is taking the following steps:

- **Independent oversight:** The Mamdani administration will increase funding for the Office of the Inspector General for the NYPD (OIG-NYPD) by $2.6 million.
- **Retirement notifications:** The NYPD has implemented a new notification system to facilitate the completion of the disciplinary process before an officer retires.
- **Rehiring policies:** The NYPD will formalize its practice of notifying the State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and submitting personnel information for decertification when an officer retires with pending disciplinary charges.
- **Ensure compliance with the STAT Act:** The NYPD will remain in full and timely compliance with its legal obligation to report police-involved death data to the State DCJS.

- **Formalize information:** The NYPD will standardize and formalize its process for sharing information with New Yorkers following a critical incident, as well as with the families of individuals killed or seriously injured in critical incidents. This will include releasing NYPD Force Investigation Division final reports to families or their representatives.

Briefs

NYS COLEIG Releases Proposed Regulations to Bolster Mandatory Ethics Training Compliance

The NYS Commission on Ethics in Lobbying & Government (COELIG) is tightening its Mandatory Client & Lobbyist Ethics Training regulation based upon legislative actions during the 2026 session. Regulations published this week in the *State Register* establish a procedure by which COELIG can fine clients and lobbying organizations that are not current with their Mandated Lobbying Ethics Training.

The authorization was approved as part of this year's Enacted State Budget and the proposed regulation were published in the *NYS Register* (10/14/2026). It is anticipated that the regulations will be in effect for the 2027-2028 filing period which begins on December 15, 2026. Below is the late fee schedule included in the proposed regulation:

Days Late	*Action*
1 – 7 days	*Grace Period/No Late Fee*
8 – 14 days	*$200 flat late fee*
15 – 30 days	*$375 flat late fee*
31 – 90 days	*$775 flat late fee*
91 – 180 days	*$2,275 flat late fee*
181 days and more	*$4,525 flat late fee*

In addition, the regulation requires training renewal every two years (down from three). Client and Lobbyist renewal dates will be revised to reflect the two-year renewal date upon regulation adoption.

New York Closing in on California in Spending for Movie Features & TV Series

California maintained its number 1 ranking in movie and television spending for 2026, but New York is close second and is drawing major titles at a more rapid pace, according to the PRODPRO TV & Film Industry Report for Q3.

State	Production Spend	Production Spend Y-o-Y %	TV and Movie Filming Count	Filming Count Y-o-Y %
California	$1,761,000,000	17%	80	–18%
New York	$1,614,000,000	87%	68	3%
Georgia	$459,000,000	32%	23	5%
New Jersey	$355,000,000	–14%	19	–24%
Illinois	$149,000,000	–24%	19	15%
New Mexico	$4,000,000	–93%	4	–67%

SOURCE: PRODPRO TV & FILM INDUSTRY INSIGHTS REPORT (Q3 2026; RELEASED OCT 15, 2026)

ProdPro's quarterly snapshot covers live-action scripted projects and includes "all projects filming in each location. If filmed in multiple locations, spend is attributed proportionally to each location based on estimated share."

New York's movie and television production spending increased 87 percent in the third quarter to $1.61 billion compared with California's 17 percent increase. California came in at $1.76 billion.

According to *The Hollywood Reporter*, soundstage infrastructure, a large crewmember union base, and easier access to neighboring Tri-State locations are contributing to New York's growth. Inventory for soundstages has grown 43 percent in the state since 2020, per real estate services company CBRE, which noted in a June report that the state is "better positioned for recovery than some competitor markets."

In addition, the Empire State is building its book of long running TV shows. This season the state hosts CIA, FBI and Elsbeth (CBS), The Fall and Rise of Reggie Dinkins (NBC) as well as staples like Law & Order and Law & Order: SVU (also NBC).

Speaker Julie Menin: City Council Will Vote on Horse Carriage Phase Out

New York City Council Speaker Julie Menin this week announced that the Council will vote on Introduction 943, sponsored by Council Member Christopher Marte, which would phase out horse-drawn carriages in Central Park by June 1, 2028. The Council will bring the bill to a vote on October 22nd.

"The horse carriage industry is coming to an end in New York City. Our administration will make sure workers and owners are protected, and the horses are safe," Mayor Mamdani wrote on X.

The bill calls for the Mamdani administration to establish employment opportunity programs for carriage drivers and other workers in the industry, including referrals to relevant job opportunities, career counseling and job placement, hiring events and career fairs, identification of educational opportunities and tuition assistance programs, and a program to assist owners in finding humane disposition of horses.

TWU International President John Samuelsen called the situation "reprehensible," according to published reports.

The bill "only includes weak measures like job fairs and job counseling, and says the city should 'consider' financial compensation for carriage owners who spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to buy city-issued medallions and build up their businesses," Samuelsen said in a statement, per *Spectrum News*. "Nothing concrete, no guarantees."

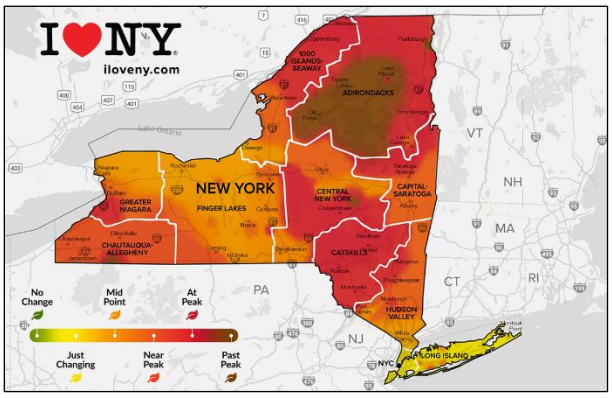
Mayor Mamdani Appoints Erin Pilnyak as Director of the Mayor's Office of Risk Management and Compliance (MORMC)

In her capacity as Director of MORMC, Erin Pilnyak will spearhead the Mamdani Administration's charge to employ data-driven strategies to cut down on the misallocation of resources, operational vulnerabilities, systemic risks, unjustified or fraudulent expenses, and inefficiencies that inhibit service delivery. She will also serve as the Citywide Lead Compliance Officer.

Pilnyak previously served as Assistant Deputy Commissioner in the New York City Police Department's Risk Management Bureau and as Deputy Director in the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. She began her career as a prosecutor in the Manhattan District Attorney's Office and later served in the Office's Crime Strategies Unit. Pilnyak is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley and Cornell Law School.

Peak Foliage Continuing Colorful Trek Across New York State

Catskills Mostly at Peak, Along with Much of Adirondacks and Central New York



Bright, beautiful foliage continues to spread across New York State with peak colors anticipated throughout the Catskills this weekend, as well as in many parts of the Adirondacks and Central New York regions. Near-peak-to-peak foliage will arrive throughout much of the Capital-Saratoga and Chautauqua-Allegheny regions as well as the mid-to-upper Hudson Valley. Near peak and peak foliage will be found throughout the middle and lower portions of the Greater Niagara region, according to the field reports from volunteer observers for the Empire State Development Division of Tourism's I LOVE NY program.

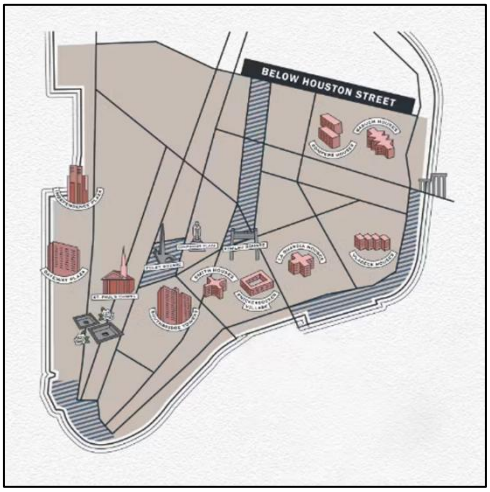
Locations with the most significant changes will include Crown Point, Ticonderoga, Malone and Croghan (Adirondacks); Saratoga Springs, Cohoes and East Nassau (Capital-Saratoga); Delhi, Hunter, Windham and Forestburgh (Catskills); Norwich, Herkimer, Cazenovia, Cooperstown and Sharon Springs (Central New York); Cortland, Homer, Marathon, Waterloo, Syracuse and Corning (Finger Lakes); Little Valley (Chautauqua-Allegheny); Springville, East Aurora and Castile (Greater Niagara); and New Paltz, Poughkeepsie, Newburgh and Cornwall (Hudson Valley).

9/11 Solidarity Network Helps Claimants Obtain Vital Documentation for 9/11 Compensation Fund Claims

It is becoming increasingly difficult for some claimants to find documents to prove their presence at an eligible location so many years after the attacks. The 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) understands this challenge and encourages individuals who were present in the exposure zone to gather and save their proof of presence documents now, even if they aren't currently ill or planning to file a claim.

The 9/11 Solidarity Network, developed by Pitta & Baione LLP, directly addresses this challenge by creating a system where members can act as witnesses for one another. This network is especially vital because sworn *Witness Presence Statements* from people who can attest to a claimant's presence are accepted as secondary evidence by the VCF when primary documentation is unavailable. By participating, you can provide the crucial testimony a fellow member might need while also securing potential support for your own future claim. This initiative formalizes the collective memory of our members to ensure no one is left to prove their presence alone.

For more information regarding the 9/11 Solidarity Network, please contact Pitta & Baione at 844-901-1262.



9/11 Exposure Zone

Coming Up

New York State

Tuesday, October 20th

New York State Workers Compensation Board Meeting, 328 State Street, Room 324, Schenectady, 10 a.m.

NYS Assembly Higher Education & Banks Committees, *Federal Lending Changes in Higher Education*, Hamilton Hearing Room B, Legislative Office Building, 2nd Floor, Albany, 10 a.m.

New York City

Monday, October 19th

Committee on Health, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 2, 10 a.m.

Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Relations, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 1, 1 p.m.

Tuesday, October 20th

Committee on Hospitals, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 2, 10 a.m.

Committee on Fire and Emergency Management, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 2, 10 a.m.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Committee Room – City Hall, 10 a.m.

Committee on Economic Development, Committee Room – City Hall, 10 a.m.

Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings, Resiliency and Dispositions, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 3, 10 a.m.

Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 3, 11 a.m.

Committee on Environmental Protection and Waterfronts, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 1, 12 p.m.

Committee on Higher Education, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 2, 1 p.m.

Committee on Education, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 2, 1 p.m.

Wednesday, October 21st

Committee on Veterans, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 3, 10 a.m.

Committee on General Welfare, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 3, 10 a.m.

Committee on Public Safety, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 2, 10 a.m.

Committee on Housing and Buildings, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 1, 10 a.m.

Committee on Mental Health and Substance Use, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 2, 1 p.m.

Committee on Land Use, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 3, 10 a.m.

Thursday, October 22nd

Committee on Finance, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 1, 10 a.m.

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

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