

A PUBLICATION OF
PITTA BISHOP & DEL GIORNO LLC
Government Relations / Consulting

THIS WEEK IN NEW YORK

COVERING NEW YORK & CITY GOVERNMENT

OCTOBER 30, 2026 EDITION



"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

Poll Site Finder

Early Voting – Saturday October 31 – Sunday, November 1st
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

General Election – Tuesday, November 3rd
6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Governor Signs Legislation to Protect Kids from AI Chatbots

New York's AI Law Will Require Age Checks for All Users

Governor Kathy Hochul this week signed legislation that prohibits artificial intelligence companions from using features which are considered unsafe for minors. Chapter 368 restricts the features companies can offer to users that are under 18 or to any user unless the company has first confirmed the user is not a minor.

"As artificial intelligence advances at a rapid pace, there have been too many tragic incidents that should have been prevented, and as New York's mom Governor, I'm taking action," Governor Hochul said**.** "No company should be peddling chatbots to kids encouraging self-harm or pretending to be their friend or more. And no new parent should have to worry that predatory hackers are spying on their new family through their baby monitors. New York is sending a clear message: if you want to do business in our state, you need to put the safety of our kids first."

Restricted features include:

- Pretending to be a real person, to be alive or to have human emotions.
- Claiming a personal, romantic, professional or authority-figure relationship with a child.
- Unprompted emotional questions, and using a child's private health or personal information from earlier conversations.
- Promoting or helping with suicide, self-harm, eating disorders or drug and alcohol use.
- Encouraging kids to keep secrets, isolate themselves or avoid asking parents, trusted adults or professionals for help.
- Any sexually explicit content or child sexual abuse material.

The law requires companies to conduct age verification and offer more than one way to verify age, including at least one option that does not depend solely on a government ID. New York's SAFE for Kids Act allows use of a "selfie", or an email address or phone number that will be checked against other data. The law states that the information collected this way "shall not be used for any purpose other than to make such determination" and must be deleted "immediately," except "where necessary for compliance with any applicable provisions of New York state or federal law or regulation."

Violations would allow the Attorney General to seek civil penalties of up to $25,000 per violation along with damages, restitution, the destruction of unlawfully collected data. Additionally, the law requires the Attorney General to maintain a public website where New Yorkers can file complaints. It takes effect January 1, 2027.

Using AI Responsibly: New Guidance for Attorneys

The Advisory Committee on Artificial Intelligence and the Courts this week released *The Risks of Using Artificial Intelligence in Preparing Court Papers: What Every Attorney Should Know*, a guide to support attorneys in the responsible and informed use of generative AI tools when preparing court filings.

"AI tools can help enhance efficiency, but they also carry risks that demand caution and informed oversight," said Chief Administrative Judge Joseph Zayas. "This document…reinforces the bedrock principle that attorneys remain fully accountable for the accuracy of the papers they submit to the courts."

The document follows the Committee's development of a Model Rule, adopted by the court system earlier this year, which dictates that attorneys who choose to use generative AI tools must understand the capabilities and limitations of those tools and independently ensure the accuracy and reliability of any information generated.

According to Judge Zayas, the guidance comes as courts across the country confront a rise in filings containing AI-generated fabrications — so-called "hallucinations" — such as nonexistent case citations or inaccurate quotations. These errors, often difficult to detect without careful review, pose significant risks for attorneys and litigants alike. The Advisory Committee's publication explains why such errors occur, how they can be avoided, and what duties attorneys must adhere to when integrating AI into their work.

Among the key points highlighted in the guidance are:

- **Understanding AI's limitations**. Generative AI tools, including widely available large language models, generate text by predicting likely word patterns rather than verifying facts, creating the possibility of fabricated cases, inaccurate quotations, or misleading legal statements.

- **Existing professional responsibilities remain unchanged.** The use of AI does not alter an attorney's obligations under the Rules of Professional Conduct or 22 NYCRR Part 130; attorneys remain fully responsible for ensuring that every factual and legal assertion submitted to a court is accurate and properly supported.

- **New York's approach centers on informed, responsible use**. The Unified Court System has adopted an informational model that permits AI use but requires independent verification of any AI-generated content. Attorneys are not required to disclose AI use at the time of filing, or to provide separate certifications, beyond the implicit certification made when signing a filing.

- **Best practices for verification and review.** The guidance urges attorneys to confirm all AI-generated citations and quotations through authoritative legal research tools, scrutinize AI-generated text for bias or inappropriate content, and document the steps taken to verify material produced with AI assistance.

- **Broader evolution of AI in legal practice.** The guidance situates attorney responsibilities within the rapidly developing regulatory landscape and highlights ongoing initiatives in AI training, CLE programming, and policy development across the court system.



Chapters of the Laws of 2026

Chapter 364, Sponsored by AM Latrice Walker/Senator Luis Sepulveda: Adds a victim of unlawful dissemination or publication of an intimate image to the definition of a victim of a sexual offense.

Chapter 365, Sponsored by AM Amy Paulin/Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton: Clarifies penalties for a lodging facility that fails to properly post information on services to help human trafficking victims.

Chapter 366, Sponsored by AM Linda Rosenthal/ Senator Michelle Hinchey: Requires the Board of Elections to notify victims of domestic violence whose registration is maintained as confidential of the expiration of the confidentiality of such registration records.

Chapter 368, Sponsored by Senator Kristen Gonzalez/AM Alex Bores: Prohibits artificial intelligence companions from using features which are considered unsafe for minors.

Chapter 369: Sponsored by Senator Jessica Ramos/AM Harry Bronson: Relates to labor peace agreements and the cannabis industry wage board*. *With chapter amendments.

In The News-New York City

BOARD OF ELECTIONS IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Find Your Poll Site and View a Sample Ballot

Early Voting – Saturday October 31 – Sunday, November 1st
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

General Election – Tuesday, November 3rd
6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Comptroller Levine Releases New Report Showing Scale of NYC's Declining Public-School Population

The Office of New York City Comptroller Mark Levine this week released *Tracking the K-12 Student Population in NYC*, a report on enrollment, demographic, and district-level trends illustrating how New York City's student population is changing, where those shifts are occurring, and how students' needs are evolving.

"Declining school enrollment is not only a challenge for our education system –it raises fundamental questions about affordability, the ability of young families to build a future in New York, and the kind of city we want to be," said City Comptroller Mark Levine. "The needs of our students are changing at the same time, as a growing number of students face economic hardship and require specialized support. We need to understand these trends to make our schools stronger, direct resources where they are needed most and give all kids the education they deserve."

According to the Comptroller, New York City public schools' K-12 enrollment fell by 19% between the 2013-14 to 2025-26 school years, a decrease of 187,000 students. When including 3K and pre-K enrollment, which rose over that period, public school total enrollment dropped 148,000 students. In school year 2025-26, public schools experienced its largest post-pandemic enrollment drop, losing nearly 22,000 students in a single year. The School Construction Authority has projected enrollment could decrease by 128,000 students by 2034-35 school year.

The report shows that the overall decline in enrollment can't be explained by students shifting to charter schools, private schools, or homeschooling. Families have appeared to leave the city as their children get older, with the steepest enrollment drop off occurring between the 5th and 6th grades as children transition from elementary to middle school. The report also shows those who remain enrolled in public schools are increasingly students with disabilities, English language learners, and those in temporary housing.

The report also found:

- **A population with substantial needs.** Approximately 73% of students live in poverty, while 14% live in temporary housing or experience homelessness. The number of public school students with disabilities and English-language learners has also increased.
- **Citywide enrollment decrease.** Public school enrollment has declined in every district, all of which have seen a decline in total student population (including charter and private school students in addition to public schools). The scale of these declines varies, however, with the sharpest drops in Upper Manhattan, the Lower East Side, parts of the Bronx, and Central Brooklyn.
- **Shifting demographics.** The share of Black students in public schools was 19% during the last school year, which was a 7-point decrease from 26% in the 2013-14 school year. This reflects the loss of more than 200,000 Black New Yorkers reported over the last two decades.
- **Decreasing impact from charter schools.** After significant increases in prior years, since 2021-22 year-over-year growth in charter school enrollment has generally remained less than 2% and hasn't surpassed 4%. Charter elementary and middle school enrollment is concentrated in the South Bronx, Upper Manhattan, and Central Brooklyn. The portion of students enrolled in NYCPS is highest in Queens Districts 25 and 26, with the lowest occurring in Brooklyn Districts 14 and 17, Manhattan District 5 and the Bronx District 7.

Briefs

Comptroller DiNapoli: Local Sales Tax Collections Up 7.6%

Local government sales tax collections totaled $19.6 billion from January to September 2026, an increase of 7.6% ($1.4 billion) compared to the same period last year, according to the quarterly sales tax report released by State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli.

The year-over-year growth in collections was stronger than the same period in 2025 (4.3%) and more than four times higher than the increase in 2024 (1.7%).

"All regions of the state had year-over-year sales tax collection increases," Comptroller DiNapoli said. "But higher costs are forcing many families to stretch their household budgets, which could in turn reduce consumer spending. Given this risk, local governments should temper their expectations for sales tax revenue growth."

Findings from Comptroller DiNapoli's report include:

- Each of the 10 regions in the state had a year-over-year increase in collections, with increases ranging from a low of 5.6% (North Country) to high of 8.5% (New York City).
- All but one county outside of New York City experienced increases in collections, with eight counties seeing double-digit growth. Sullivan County was the only county to see a year-over-year decrease in collections at -1.9%, and St. Lawrence County had almost no growth (0.3%).

- Wayne County saw the highest growth at 16.3%, followed by the counties of Montgomery (15.3%), Seneca (13.4%), Genesee (11.8%) and Wyoming (11.2%).

New York's Legal Cannabis Market Surpasses $4 Billion in Retail Sales

Governor Kathy Hochul this week announced that New York's regulated adult-use cannabis market has surpassed $4.1 billion in retail sales since adult-use sales began in December 2022.

"When New York legalized adult-use cannabis, we made a promise to build an industry that is safe, fair and creates real opportunity for the communities hit hardest by decades of failed drug policies. Topping $4 billion in sales shows that promise is a reality," Governor Kathy Hochul said.

New York's Cannabis Market at a Glance:

- ***$4.1 Billion +***: Retail sales to date
- ***$1.41 Billion***: Retail sales through the third quarter of 2026
- ***2,351***: Cannabis licenses issued statewide
- ***1,039***: Licensed adult-use retailers statewide
- ***2,257***: Storefront Inspections to date
- ***738***: Padlocked and closed illegal cannabis storefronts to date
- ***1,615***: Notice of Violations Issued
- ***$276,853,531***: Estimated value of illegal products seized
- ***744***: Licensed adult-use dispensaries open and operating
- ***56%***: Share of adult-use licenses awarded to Social and Economic Equity applicants

"New York set out to build a cannabis market where opportunity is shared, equity is meaningful, and businesses have a real chance to succeed," New York State Cannabis Control Board Chair Jessica Garcia said. "Today, we are seeing that vision take shape across the state. This milestone reflects tremendous progress, but it also raises the bar for what comes next. The measure of this market's success will continue to be not only how much it grows, but whether that growth creates a lasting opportunity for the New Yorkers this market was designed to serve."

NY to Appeal Federal Rulings Striking Down New York's Climate Change Superfund Act

New York Attorney General Letitia James' office filed appeals challenging two U.S. district court rulings blocking the state's Climate Change Superfund Act, according to published reports. The appeals will go before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

The Act would require certain fossil fuel companies to contribute a combined $75 billion toward climate projects based on greenhouse gas emissions attributed to their fossil fuel production and refining activities.

The rulings came in two separate federal lawsuits. A coalition of 22 states and industry groups filed one in the Northern District of New York, while the U.S. Department of Justice and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) filed another in the Southern District of New York.

New York State Launches Dashboard Tracking Flu, COVID-19 and RSV activity

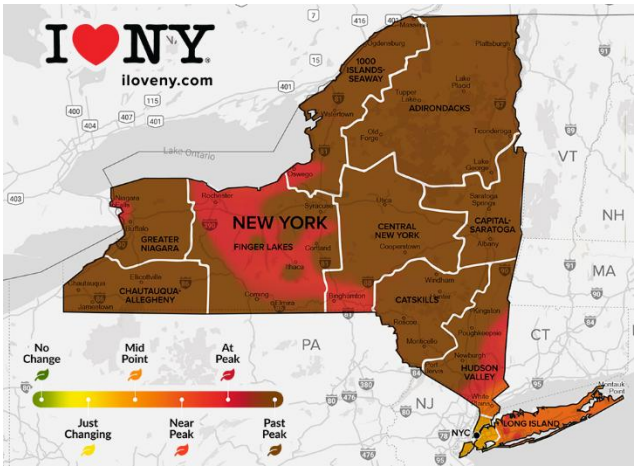
The New York State Department of Health launched a new dashboard tracking seasonal respiratory virus activity, as state health officials warn that flu season is starting earlier than usual.

The Seasonal Respiratory Virus Surveillance Dashboard provides information on influenza, COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus, including laboratory-confirmed cases and hospitalizations. Users can view trends over time and examine activity by geographic location.

This year, the data indicates that flu season is starting earlier than usual and that vaccination rates, based on vaccinations reported to the State, are lower than in previous years. State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald declared that influenza (flu) is now prevalent in New York State.

"As we head into respiratory illness season early this year, I encourage all eligible New Yorkers, and especially vulnerable populations, to protect their health by receiving their seasonal COVID and influenza vaccines," State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald said**.** "Flu, COVID, and RSV are vaccine preventable diseases and vaccines are the best protection against serious illness or death."

Foliage Report



Spectacular peak foliage is expected to arrive this weekend throughout many parts of the Finger Lakes as well as the central and lower portions of the Hudson Valley and several locations on Long Island. Additionally, peak fall colors are making their final appearances in the Thousand Islands-Seaway, Greater Niagara and Central New York regions, while New York City is at midpoint of change. This is 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 include Binghamton (Central New York); Elmira, Greece, Farmington and Seneca Falls (Finger Lakes); Buffalo, Niagara Falls and Lewiston (Greater Niagara); Oswego (Thousand Islands-Seaway); Beacon, Cornwall-on-Hudson, Cold Spring, Orangeburg, Pomona and Bear Mountain (Hudson Valley); and Wantagh, Manhasset, Roslyn, Cold Spring Harbor, West Hempstead and West Babylon (Long Island).

Coming Up

New York State

There are no meetings on the State level at the time of this Publication*

New York City

Monday, November 2nd

Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor –Room 1, 10 a.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 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.

40 Wall Street, 24th Floor
New York, New York 10005
Telephone (212) 652-3890

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

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