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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 Signs Detective Brian Simonsen's Law to Crack Down on Cell Phone Theft

Governor Kathy Hochul continues her emphasis on making public safety her top priority, signing legislation this week to require wireless service providers to disable services to stolen wireless telephones, removing the incentive to commit theft.

Sponsored by AM Amy Paulin and Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton, Chapter 543 is named after Detective Brian Simonsen, a heroic NYPD officer who lost his life in 2019 while responding to an armed robbery at a cell phone store.

“Any robbery has the potential to turn into something violent, which we saw in New York City where Detective Brian Simonsen was tragically killed during a cell phone store robbery. We need to keep our officers and residents safe, and this new law is a commonsense step in that direction. If robbers know they won’t be able to use the phones they steal, there’s no reason to steal them,” AM Paulin said.

The legislation amends the State’s General Business Law to require any entity providing wireless telephone services to have and maintain a program designed to prevent the activation of a wireless phone that appears on the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA) block list. In addition, wireless telephone providers that are informed by a retail store operator of the theft of any new, non-activated phones must take reasonable steps to report the IMEI number of the stolen phone to the GSMA Block list. They are also required to have a program designed to suspend service to a stolen cell phone upon notification by a verified customer that the phone has been stolen.

"...The NYPD puts their lives at risk every day to protect and serve our community. Unfortunately, our officers too often make the ultimate sacrifice, as criminals repeatedly endanger people for financial gain, whether by targeting innocent retail workers or individuals on the street," Senator Scarcella-Spanton explained. "I’m proud to sponsor this legislation to better regulate the resale of stolen goods and help prevent further tragedies caused by criminals profiting from illegal activities. Thank you to Governor Hochul for signing my bill into law and to Paul DiGiacomo, Scott Munro, and the DEA for their advocacy."



Chapters of the Laws of 2024

Chapter 474 – Sponsored by AM Paulin/Senator Webb – Provides Medicaid coverage for remote ultrasound scans and remote fetal non-stress tests.

Chapter 480 - Sponsored by AM Sillitti/Senator Cleare – Adds food intolerances to the notice that Department of Health provides to food service establishments.

Chapter 488 – Sponsored by AM Jackson/Senator Sepulveda – Requires landlords and lessors provide notice to tenants about bed bug infestation.

Chapter 491 – Sponsored by AM McDonald/Senator Stavisky – Allows for the implementation of shared pharmacy services in New York State.

Chapter 500 – Sponsored by AM Simone/Senator Hoylman-Sigal – Authorizes boards of elections to establish absentee ballot drop-off locations.

Chapter 461 – Sponsored by AM Rosenthal/Senator Gounardes – Requires places of public assembly to maintain epinephrine auto-injector devices and to have at least one employee who is trained in its use.

Chapter 516 – Sponsored by AM McDonald/Senator Webb – Includes nasal sprays in topical therapeutic pharmaceutical agents optometrists are authorized to use.

Chapter 520 – Sponsored by AM Paulin/Senator May – Modifies physician assistant standards in New York including increasing the number of physician assistants allowed to be supervised in a private practice and allow physician assistants to issue inpatient medical orders for durable medical equipment.

Chapter 531 – Sponsored by AM Lavine/Senator Hoylman-Sigal – Relates to the annual maintenance allowance received by employees who are required to wear an employer-approved blazer.

Chapter 534 – Sponsored by AM Braunstein/Senator Comrie – Authorizes the City of New York to use construction manager build and progressive design build in limited instances.

Chapter 536 – Sponsored by AM Weprin/Senator Sanders – Prohibits label obstruction of over-the-counter drugs.

Chapter 537 – Sponsored by AM Dinowitz/Senator Persaud – Expanding the parameters and methods by which health club contracts may be cancelled.

Chapter 538 – Sponsored by AM Solages/Senator Sanders – Prohibits the imposition of certain fees at the expiration of a term on a motor vehicle lease which constitutes administrative, clerical or handling charges.

Chapter 539 – Sponsored by AM Cunningham/Senator Hoylman-Sigal – Requires telemarketers to provide certain information within the first thirty seconds of a call and to disclose certain addresses in written communication to customers.

Chapter 540 – Sponsored by AM Rosenthal/Senator Thomas – Requires restaurants that offer online delivery services to post on their website or mobile application a hyperlink to view recent sanitary inspection grades, on their website.

Chapter 541 – Sponsored by AM Cunningham/Senator Hinchey – Allows courts to issue orders of protection for immediate family members or household members of the named victims, regardless of age.

Chapter 543 – Sponsored by AM Paulin/Senator Scarcella-Spanton – Requires wireless communication method service providers disable services to stolen wireless phones.

Chapter 545 – Sponsored by Senator Fernandez/AM Sayegh – Includes removal or threat of removal of religious clothing as aggravated harassment in the second degree.



Bills Vetoed by the Governor

Veto 20 – Sponsored by AM Kelles/Senator May – Establishes the LGBTQ+ advisory board.

Veto 22 – Sponsored by AM Paulin/Senator Mayer – Relates to state agency contracts with not-for-profit corporations.

Veto 29 – Sponsored by AM Epstein/Senator Mannion – Relates to participation by individuals with disabilities with respect to state employment and state contracts.

Veto 36 – Sponsored by AM Lavine/Senator Hoylman-Sigal – Relates to limiting recordkeeping and reporting duties of public notaries.

Veto 39 – Sponsored by AM Hunter/Senator Breslin – Provides for the issuance of pet insurance.

Veto 41 – Sponsored by AM Barrett/Senator Comrie – Requires NYSERDA to develop a comprehensive electric vehicle fast charging station implementation plan.

Veto 48 – Sponsored by AM Burgos/Senator Comrie – Requires the New York state thruway authority to submit biannual reports to the legislature of all fiscal transactions, receipts and expenditures.

Veto 49 – Sponsored by AM Paulin/Senator Rivera – Relates to a review of reimbursement adequacy for early intervention services.

Veto 52 – Sponsored by AM Paulin/Senator Rivera – Allows physician assistants to serve as primary care practitioners for purposes of Medicaid managed care plans.

Veto 54 – Sponsored by AM Seawright/Senator Mannion – Requires the office for people with developmental disabilities to produce and publish a report on staffing at state-operated institutions under the jurisdiction of such office.

Veto 59 – Sponsored by AM Jean-Pierre/Senator Scarcella-Spanton – Establishes the position of an insurance liaison on the disaster preparedness commission.

Veto 60 – Sponsored by AM Levenberg/Senator May – Ensures that color vision requirements for appointment of police officers are tailored to only eliminate individuals with extreme color vision deficiencies from eligibility.

Veto 66 – Sponsored by AM Cruz/Senator Martinez – Reconvenes the New York state sea level rise task force.

Veto 67 – Sponsored by AM Vanel/Senator Sanders – Establishes the New York state cryptocurrency and blockchain study task force.

Veto 68 – Sponsored by AM Weprin/Senator Breslin – Directs the department of financial services to conduct a study examining private flood insurance.

Veto 72 – Sponsored by AM Pretlow/Senator Addabbo – Relates to the acceleration of the downstate casino licenses.

In The News-New York City

Cracking Down on Organized Retail Theft



Criminal Charges in \$2 Million Organized Retail Theft Bust Ahead of Holiday Shopping Season

Governor Kathy Hochul and Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz yesterday announced a criminal complaint in the ongoing fight against organized retail theft. The charges allege a multi-year, international operation that saw upwards of \$2 million in retail goods stolen by organized crews.

The case includes the first-ever charges under New York's newly enacted law criminalizing the fostering of stolen goods sales included as part of the FY25 State Budget.

According to the Governor, the defendants, Christopher Guzman and Yvelisse Guzman Batista per published reports, allegedly managed crews that stole items from shops in

New York, New Jersey, Maryland and other East Coast-based locations. including high-end makeup, perfume, beauty products, designer clothing and accessories, then marketed it locally and abroad under the name Yvelisse Fashion, LLC. The couple is also alleged to have paid truck drivers to divert products bound for retailers such as Sephora and Ulta Beauty from manufacturer warehouses directly to locations under their control. Among the charges brought against the defendants is fostering the sale of stolen goods, the first time this newly adopted crime has been charged in New York.

The defendants allegedly received approximately \$50,000 worth of stolen goods per week for which they paid the theft crews approximately 10 to 15 percent of retail value. The goods were then catalogued and sold in New York through online advertisements as well as from a brick-and-mortar boutique called Yvelisse Fashion in Santiago, Dominican Republic.

The investigation was conducted by the New York State Police Special Investigations Unit including members of the Governor's Retail Theft Task Force, along with members of the Queens District Attorney's Detective Bureau, and personnel from the Homeland Security Investigations, New York Border Enforcement Security Task Force's Trade Enforcement and Interdiction Group and Customs and Border Protection. Retailers Ulta Beauty, Sephora, Macy's, American Eagle and Victoria's Secret assisted in the investigation.

Briefs

Attorney General James Reminds New Yorkers that Selling Pets in Retail Stores Will be Illegal

New York Attorney General Letitia James reminds licensed pet dealers with retail stores that selling dogs, cats, and rabbits will be illegal in New York starting on December 15th.

According to the Attorney General, the pet sale ban is intended to stop dangerous large-scale breeding operations known as “puppy mills,” where animals are often mistreated and suffer from serious health issues.

Retail pet stores that continue to sell pets after December 15th can face penalties of up to \$1,000 per violation. New Yorkers can still adopt pets from duly incorporated humane societies, animal rescues, or licensed breeders.

The Puppy Mill Pipeline Act, co-sponsored by Senator Michael Gianaris and Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal, prohibits retail pet shops from selling, leasing, or transferring ownership of dogs, cats, or rabbits. Pet stores may still partner with registered, nonprofit animal rescue organizations to showcase animals available for adoption. The law allows pet stores to collect reasonable rental fees from rescue groups for space to showcase pets for adoption. Violators of the Puppy Mill Pipeline Act may be subject to enforcement action by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), which could include penalties of up to \$1,000 per violation.

Comptroller DiNapoli: New Law Makes It Easier for the State To Return Your Lost Money

Governor Kathy Hochul has signed legislation enabling the Office of the State Comptroller to expedite certain unclaimed funds payments of \$250 or less.

Proposed by DiNapoli’s office, Chapter 498 of the Laws of 2024 amends the Abandoned Property Law to authorize the State Comptroller to administer a newly established expedited payment program, which eliminates the need for persons and organizations to submit a claim for abandoned property of \$250 or less that can be validated. The legislation was sponsored by Senator Luis Sepúlveda and Assemblymember John T. McDonald III.

According to the Comptroller, the average claim paid out is between \$50 and \$100. Every day, the Comptroller’s office returns over \$1.5 million.

NYC’s Construction Site Safety Regulations Will Soon Cover Buildings Seven or More Stories or 75 Feet in Height

Effective December 11th, New York City’s [construction site safety regulations](#) will apply to buildings seven or more stories or 75 feet or more in height under Local Law 147 of 2021 which revised the definition of “major buildings.”

Under current NYC building laws, major buildings are defined as, “an existing or proposed building 10 or more stories or 125 feet or more in height, or an existing or proposed building with a building footprint of 100,000 square feet or more regardless of height.” [Local Law 147 of 2021](#) expands the definition.

According to NYC Buildings, the new definition of major building will apply to initial permits issued and initial permit requests submitted on or after December 11, 2024. Beginning December 11, the site safety requirements will apply to any job on a major building that meets the new definition of a major building. Any job filed before December 11, for which an initial General Construction (GC), Structural (ST), Foundation (FO), Support of Excavation (SE), or Earthwork (EA) permit has not been requested or issued as of December 11, 2024, will be required to comply with the site safety requirements.

NYC DOT Completes Installation of Over 500 Loading Zones

New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez this week announced that the agency has installed over 500 new loading zones to address public feedback on where they experience double parking and blocked bike and bus lanes due to vehicle loading and unloading.

Local Law 168 of 2021 requires NYC DOT to consider local input from community boards, elected officials, and the general public when locating new loading zones. Since December 2021, NYC DOT has installed nearly 3,000 loading zones.

Coming Up

New York State

Tuesday, December 3rd

Public Hearing – Capital Funding, Assembly Standing Committee on Higher Education, Hamilton Hearing Room B, LOB, 2nd Floor, Albany, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, December 4th

Public Hearing – Mitchell-Lama Program, Assembly Standing Committee on Housing, Assembly Hearing Room, 250 Broadway, 19th Floor, New York, 10 a.m.

New York City

Monday, December 2nd

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

Wednesday, December 3rd

Committee on Women and Gender Equity, Council Chambers – City Hall, 1 p.m.

Committee on Education, Council Chambers – City Hall, 1 p.m.

Committee on Governmental Operations, State & Federal Legislation,

Committee Room – City Hall, 1 p.m.

Thursday, December 4th

Committee on Finance, Committee Room – City Hall, 10:30 p.m.

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

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