



# This Week in New York

**Covering New York State and City Government**

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*“Every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street building has been renamed, every date has been altered. And the process is continuing day by day and minute by minute. History has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right.”*  
*-George Orwell, 1984-*

## *In the News – New York State*



### **New York Lawmakers to Draw Redistricting Maps Will Vote Next Week**



New York State lawmakers will determine the State's redistricting process after the Independent Redistricting Commission failed to reach an agreement on district boundaries for the State Senate, Assembly, and U.S. House of Representatives. District lines are revised every 10 years.

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie issued a joint statement on Wednesday stating that the Legislature will assume the responsibility to produce "fair maps" and to vote on these maps next week.

"The statutory deadline for the Independent Redistricting Commission to submit congressional and state legislative maps has passed," the lawmakers said in the statement. "As per the New York State Constitution, it becomes the Legislature's responsibility to consider fair maps that ensure all New Yorkers have equitable representation in their government. That is a duty we take very seriously. Given the expedited nature of the political calendar, we fully expect the Senate and Assembly to consider new fair maps in a timely manner. The plan is to vote on these maps next week."

Earlier this month, the Senate and the Assembly rejected maps drawn by Democratic and Republican members of the Commission.

New York is expected to lose one seat in the House of Representatives based upon population changes.



## NYS Office of Cannabis Management Releases Local Opt-out Data

*10% of Cities and 34% of All Localities Opted-Out of  
All Sales*

The New York State Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) this week released data showing that 10% of cities and 34% of all municipalities have opt-ed out of all cannabis sales.

The Marijuana Regulation & Taxation Act (MRTA) gave cities, towns, and villages until December 31, 2021 to pass a local law requesting that the state Cannabis Control Board (CCB) opt their jurisdiction out of hosting retail and/or on-site cannabis consumption licensees. In November, the OCM opened a web-based portal to help localities fulfill this requirement.

The Cannabis Control Board will use the information provided as it approves retail licenses for the adult-use cannabis industry. Municipalities that opted out can opt in at any time. A full list of filings is available [here](#) and will be updated periodically to reflect additional opt-out filings or localities opting-in.

Also, at the CCB Board meeting this week, Board Member Reuben McDaniel briefed the Board on the \$200 million New York Social Equity Cannabis Fund that Governor Kathy Hochul included in her State of the State Address earlier this month.

The public-private fund will provide funding to certain eligible applicants from communities impacted by disproportionate policing during the decades-long cannabis prohibition. The fund will have support from licensing fees and revenue, drawing in private investors and making the fund available early in the process of building the new cannabis industry.

The Fund will provide support to certain licensed social and economic equity entrepreneurs for the costs of establishing and operating adult-use cannabis retail dispensaries. In addition, the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) will deliver a range of services directly to certain social equity cannabis retail operators, including but not limited to:

- Identifying and acquiring or leasing retail dispensary locations.
- Designing, constructing, and renovating the locations to operate as adult-use cannabis dispensaries.
- Fitting out locations with furniture and other equipment as needed to operate the establishments, among other activities.

# *In the News – City*



## **Mayor Adams Releases Blueprint to End Gun Violence**

New York City Mayor Eric Adams this week released a “[Blueprint to End Gun Violence](#)” in [New York City](#), which lays out Mayor Adams’ priorities to immediately address the crisis of guns on New York City streets.

The Blueprint calls for both intervention and prevention to end the gun violence surge in New York. The Mayor’s reforms include increasing NYPD initiatives, expanding City health and opportunity programs, enacting State legislative changes including revisions to bail reform and the Raise the Age initiatives, and increasing coordination with the federal government.

### **NYPD**

- ***Bolstering existing Public Safety Units with new Neighborhood Safety Teams that focus on gun violence.*** The Department expects to launch these teams in the next three weeks with a special focus on the 30 precincts where 80% of violence occurs.
- ***Putting more officers on patrol.*** More officers will be placed on patrol in key neighborhoods throughout the city, aiming to have fewer officers at desks and “staffing events where they are not needed.”
- ***Expanding the partnership between NYPD and State Police.*** The agencies will increase the public safety presence around public transportation facilities and create joint strategies to zero-in on illegal guns used in high-intensity drug trafficking areas. In addition, they will add more detection efforts at City entry points for the “Iron Pipeline.”
- ***Increasing resources for the Gun Violence Suppression Division.*** NYPD will strengthen the resources to this “highly-specialized unit” within the Detectives Bureau that is tasked with seizing illegal guns and building cases against illegal carriers, traffickers, and sellers.
- ***Deepening coordination with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATI) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).*** The Adams Administration will deepen its coordination and information sharing with the ATI and the FBI, utilizing “impact jurisdiction” lawsuits, if necessary.

### **City Services**

- ***Launching an unprecedented Summer Youth Employment program.*** The Adams Administration will launch an unprecedented Summer Youth Employment and Youth Engagement Program for Summer 2022. This effort will include partnerships with large businesses and corporations across the city, with a goal of identifying paid internship opportunities.

- **Expanding the Fair Futures Initiative** which provides life coaches through age 26.
- **Expanded Health Care.** The Health Department will expand Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs (HVIPs) to 10 additional hospitals in the communities experiencing high rates of gun violence.
- **Expanded Mental Health Care.** The Adams Administration will refocus funding spent on existing programming from the Mayor’s Office of Community Mental Health into areas of direct need, including support for those experiencing homelessness; revisit existing law so that “if someone who can’t take care of themselves refuses treatment, they can be hospitalized if that is what a doctor and judge recommend”; increase aid from the federal government and state partners for additional hospital beds.
- **City Agency Anti-Gun Violence Liaison:** City agencies will identify a dedicated Anti-Gun Violence Liaison in who is responsible for addressing gun violence issues reported to their agencies.
- **Creating a Quality of Life Task Force.** This Task Force will include senior leaders of the NYPD, DSNY, and DHS, as well as mental health experts and additional city leaders as needed. The mission of this Task Force will be charged with providing a coordinated delivery of needed City services to areas that have seen a rise in crime and a deterioration of their neighborhoods.
- **City Judicial Appointments.** In future mayoral judicial appointments, a demonstrated commitment to keeping violent criminals who use guns off New York City streets will be a top priority and consideration under the Adams Administration.

## State

- **Ball Reform:** The Adams Administration proposes the following changes:
  - **Allowing judges to take dangerousness into account.** According to the Mayor, judges must be able to evaluate a defendant’s criminal history and the circumstances of their alleged crime using reasonable criteria to detain those individuals who pose a threat to the safety of the community, especially regarding gun violence. A judge must also state his or her reasons for detention on the record, and a defendant must be entitled to a speedy appeal.
  - **Judges’ decisions regarding dangerousness must be public,** and their reasons must be stated on the record.
- **“Raise The Age”:** The Adams Administration “fully supports” the 2017 New York State legislation and advocates an amendment in relation to gun arrests:
  - If a 16- or 17-year-old is arrested on a gun charge, law enforcement should ask the individual where they got the gun. If the individual refuses to disclose that information, prosecutors should have the ability to charge the individual in Criminal Court, rather than Family Court.
  - The public display of the gun should not be a factor as it is under current legislation; the carrying of a gun should be treated the same way whether the individual displays it or not.

- **Discovery:** the Adams Administration will advocate for two additional reforms to the 2019 Discovery Law:
  - **Allowing District Attorneys to move forward earlier with gun charges.** The Mayor is calling upon the State to pass legislation empowering DAs, in the event of a gun charge, to proceed with Section 30.30 if they have enough evidence to bring to trial, even as they accumulate additional pieces. All evidence would be required to be handed over in discovery 30 days before the trial.
  - **Removing overly burdensome disclosures.** The Mayor is calling upon the State to distinguish what is truly necessary for discovery, especially in cases where a complainant directly brought law enforcement to the scene.
- **Raising the penalty for gun trafficking.** Currently, an individual receives a Class B felony for selling 10 or more guns in a single year. The Adams Administration is calling for the legislation that lowers the number to 3 or more guns in a one-year period. The Mayor also urge State legislation to define the possession of 3 or more guns as presumptive evidence of gun trafficking, not merely gun possession.
- **Community Hiring efforts.** The Mayor supports Community Hiring legislation that will allow the City to require those doing business with us to hire New Yorkers from targeted communities.

## *Briefs*

### **NYS Requests \$1.6 Billion from Federal Government for Rent Assistance**

Governor Kathy Hochul this week announced that New York State has requested an additional \$1.6 billion from the U.S. Treasury Department to help fulfill the unmet need among tenants and landlords who have applied for Emergency Rental Assistance.

Under Governor Hochul's direction, the state Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance — the agency that administers the program — made the formal request ahead of the next round of federal rent relief reallocation. If granted, the funding would cover roughly 174,000 tenant applications that are not yet funded.

### **Governor Hochul Convenes New Interstate Task Force on Illegal Guns, Including Partnership with Mayor Adams and NYPD**

Governor Hochul this week led the first meeting of the Interstate Task Force on Illegal Guns. The multi-state consortium convened to share intelligence, tools, tactics, and strategies to combat gun violence, especially as it relates to the trafficking of firearms between states.

Representatives from the New York State Police, the New York Police Department, and the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives were joined by law enforcement representatives from Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, Ohio, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New Hampshire. The group discussed ways to improve gun data sharing across local, state and federal lines and explored the differences in federal and state laws that relate to ghost guns.

## **Former Obama Advisor and Finance Executive Confirmed as New York's Top Financial Regulator**

The State Senate this week confirmed Adrienne Harris, a former public policy professor, presidential advisor, financial executive, and corporate lawyer, as Superintendent of New York's Department of Financial Services.

"I am honored to serve as the Superintendent of the Department of Financial Services," Harris said in a statement following the vote. "As the first African American woman to lead DFS, I am personally committed to working with all stakeholders to build a robust, fair and sustainable financial system, creating a better economic future for all New Yorkers."

The Department of Financial Services, New York's main financial regulator, oversees over 3,000 financial institutions controlling over \$8 trillion in assets. Its responsibilities include chartering banks, regulating insurance companies and mortgages, and licensing cryptocurrencies.

## **Absentee Voting Due to COVID-19 Extended through 2022**

Governor Kathy Hochul signed legislation that will allow voting by absentee ballot due to the COVID-19 pandemic through 2022.

Chapter 2 of the Laws of 2022 extends a measure first put in place in July 2020 and allows residents to request an absentee ballot to avoid the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19 at polling locations. The initial law expired on December 31.

"No one should have to choose between exercising their right to vote and protecting their health and safety," Governor Hochul said in a statement. "This legislation will ensure the pandemic does not create inaccessibility for voters during upcoming elections and help protect New Yorkers' access to the ballot."

## **Governor Hochul Appoints Director of the NYS Office of Gun Violence Prevention**

Governor Kathy Hochul this week appointed Calliana S. Thomas as the Director of the New York State Office of Gun Violence Prevention (OGVP). The OGVP is charged with identifying key partners in the community and law enforcement to identify steps that can be taken to curb gun violence in the State.

Located within the Department of Health's Center for Community Health, the OGVP will collaborate with the Division of Criminal Justice Services and other State agencies.

Before joining the Hochul administration, Ms. Thomas was the Assistant Director of Technical Assistance with the William Julius Wilson Institute for Harlem Children's Zone. She began her career at Harlem's Minisink Townhouse, managing their youth development and restorative justice programming.

Ms. Thomas attended the Post-Baccalaureate Program in Pre-Medical Science at Columbia University, and obtained a B.S. in Psychology from Georgia State University.

## **Biden Administration Withdraws Covid-19 Vaccination and Testing Regulation for Large Businesses**

The Biden administration is withdrawing its Covid-19 vaccination and testing regulation aimed at large businesses, following the Supreme Court's decision to block the rule earlier this month.

The US Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration said Tuesday it will be withdrawing the vaccination and testing emergency temporary standard for businesses with 100 or more employees, according to a statement on the agency's website.

"Although OSHA is withdrawing the vaccination and testing ETS as an enforceable emergency temporary standard, the agency is not withdrawing the ETS as a proposed rule. The agency is prioritizing its resources to focus on finalizing a permanent COVID-19 Healthcare Standard," the statement read.

## **Mayor Adams Appoints Thomas Foley, P.E. as Design and Construction Commissioner**

New York City Mayor Eric Adams this week announced the appointment of Thomas J. Foley, P.E. as Commissioner of the New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC). Foley previously served as Acting Commissioner. A 25-year veteran of DDC, Foley will oversee the city's capital construction projects, which include infrastructure and public buildings.

Foley has held a variety of roles at the agency, including Deputy Director, Director, and Assistant Commissioner in the agency's Division of Infrastructure. In January 2014, he became Associate Commissioner in the Division of Infrastructure. In January 2017, he assumed the role of Deputy Commissioner of the Public Buildings Division

Foley earned his B.S. in Civil Engineering from Manhattan College. He is a licensed professional engineer and a certified construction manager. He also serves on the national board of the Design Build Institute of America.

## NYC Fire Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro Announces His Retirement

Fire Department of New York (FDNY) Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro announced his retirement from the FDNY effective February 16, 2022.

“Since the day I raised my right hand 53 years ago and followed my father into the greatest fire department in the world, I have been blessed, privileged, and truly honored to serve the people of our great city,” said Fire Commissioner Nigro. “On days of triumphant rescues and during times of unimaginable loss, the members of the FDNY — our firefighters, EMTs, paramedics, fire marshals, fire inspectors, and civilian staff — have always answered the call. They are extraordinary people and are deeply committed to protecting the lives and property of all New Yorkers. It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve as their fire commissioner.”

Commissioner Nigro is one of only six individuals to hold every rank in the FDNY and has served the FDNY across seven decades. He is the fourth longest serving commissioner in FDNY’s history. Commissioner Nigro was appointed by Mayor Bill de Blasio in 2014.

## Coming Up

### *New York State*

#### *Monday, January 31<sup>st</sup>*

*Assembly Session*, Remote, 1:45 p.m.

*Senate Session*, Remote, 3 p.m.

#### *NYS Legislative Budget Hearing, Virtual*

11 a.m. Workforce

2 p.m. Housing

#### *Tuesday, February 1<sup>st</sup>*

#### *NYS Legislative Budget Hearing, Virtual*

Environmental Conservation, 9:30 a.m.

*Assembly Session*, Remote, time to be announced.

*Senate Session*, Remote, 3 p.m.

#### *Wednesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>*

#### *NYS Legislative Budget Hearing, Virtual*

Human Services, 9:30 a.m.

*Assembly Session*, Remote, time to be announced.

*Senate Session*, Remote, 11 a.m.

## *New York City*

No Scheduled Hearings\*

(\* ) at time of publication

**“No man can be a good citizen unless he has a wage more than sufficient to cover the bare cost of living, and hours of labor short enough so 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.”**

**-Theodore Roosevelt-**

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