



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



U.S. Supreme Court Justice Nomination

President Biden nominated Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to serve as the next Justice on the Supreme Court. In doing so the President said “Judge Jackson is one of our nation’s brightest legal minds and has an unusual breadth of experience in our legal system, giving her the perspective to be an exceptional Justice.” Brooklyn Democratic Party Chair Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn issued the following statement:

“We are bearing witness to history today. Ketanji Brown Jackson, an experienced judge and brilliant legal mind, will be the first Black woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. For me, and women of color everywhere, this is a highly-anticipated day, and consequential milestone for our nation. Judge Brown Jackson’s nomination is proof to future generations that we can have much more than just a ‘seat at the table’: we can have a place on the bench.”

Judge Jackson was born in Washington, DC and grew up in Miami, Florida. In a 2017 lecture, Judge Jackson traced her love of the law back to sitting next to her father in their apartment as he tackled his law school homework—reading cases and preparing for Socratic questioning—while she undertook her preschool homework—coloring books.

Judge Jackson stood out as a high achiever throughout her childhood. She was a speech and debate star who was elected “mayor” of Palmetto Junior High and student body president of Miami Palmetto Senior High School. Judge Jackson graduated magna cum laude from Harvard University, then attended Harvard Law School, where she graduated cum laude and was an editor of the Harvard Law Review.

Judge Jackson was one of President Biden’s first judicial nominees. She was confirmed with bipartisan support to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit in 2021

Judge Jackson lives with her husband, Patrick, and their two daughters, in Washington, DC.



Ski New York!

From the folks at I Love NY! New York has the most ski resorts of any state, offering high peaks, scenic trails, and fresh powder for skiers and snowboarders of all levels. World-class skiing and snowboarding are always nearby, from the scenic Adirondacks slopes at Whiteface Mountain and Gore Mountain to Catskills favorites such as Hunter Mountain and Windham. Just learning your way around the slopes? Resorts such as Holiday Valley and Peek 'n Peak in Chautauqua-Allegheny offer lessons to help make you feel more comfortable. Learn about adaptive skiing for all abilities in New York.

Visit *I Ski NY* for important messages about planning ahead, the latest snow reports and what to expect when you hit the slopes. and call ahead and check websites and social media to make sure attractions and amenities are open and available.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation recently advised backcountry users in the Adirondacks, especially the High Peaks Region, of potential avalanche and high water risk following mild temperatures, high winds, and rain. Warmer weather and rain will melt existing snowpack, swelling waterways and making water crossings dangerous. High winds and a return to colder temperatures will then result in re-freezing. Avalanche danger increases during thaws and snow becomes increasingly unstable as it undergoes freeze/thaw cycles.

DEC advises that where bridges are not available, do not attempt stream crossings during periods of high, fast-moving water. Water temperatures will be extremely cold and full or partial submersion can quickly lead to hypothermia. Be cautious on frozen bodies of water, especially near shore, over moving bodies of water, and where streams enter and exit lakes and ponds. Follow ice safety guidelines and remember that slush ice is approximately 50 percent weaker than new, clear ice.

Backcountry downhill skiers, snowboarders, and others who may traverse slides or steep, open terrain should be aware of and prepared for avalanche conditions. Avalanches can occur in any situation where snow, slope, and weather conditions combine to create the proper conditions. While the majority of steep, open terrain is found in the High Peaks region of the Adirondacks, avalanche-prone terrain is found on mountains throughout the Adirondacks, including Snowy Mountain in Hamilton County. Skiers and snowboarders should assess their own experience level before going into the backcountry and should be equipped with avalanche safety tools and knowledge, such as participation in an avalanche safety course.

Additional information on avalanche danger, preparedness, and safety precautions is available on the DEC website.

In the News – City



Homeless Take Shelter Underground

CLAYTON GUSE, the *New York Daily News* transit reporter writes that hundreds of homeless people were found camping out in subway tunnels and stations across the city earlier this month according to the MTA.

A survey by transit crews and homeless outreach workers performed earlier this month found more than 350 people living in subway tunnels and stations when they surveyed the city's more than 650 miles of subway tracks and 472. Guse reported that according to the MTA, the homeless people in the tunnels were promptly removed. MTA officials said the agency relays locations of encampments to police and the Bowery Residents Committee, which is contracted by the city to do homeless outreach in the subway.

The tunnel sweeps came as Mayor Adams and Gov. Hochul vowed to increase homeless outreach on mass transit, and in some cases rely on mental health workers to diagnose mentally ill people and force them into care. The NYPD has also been instructed to enforce subway rules, like a ban on large carts on trains and a requirement for riders to exit a station when a train reaches its final stop.

It is reported that unauthorized people went onto subway tracks in 1,267 incidents 2021. 200 people were struck by trains last year, and 68 of them died.

Every one of the city's 472 subway stations have been equipped with cameras since last year. The MTA also plans to install platform security gates at three subway stations that only open when trains arrive to keep people off of the tracks.



MAYOR ADAMS COMMISSIONS THE SANDY GROUND, STATEN ISLAND FERRY NAMED FOR NEW YORK'S FIRST FREE BLACK COMMUNITY

STATEN ISLAND – New York City Mayor Eric Adams commissioned the *Sandy Ground*, a new Staten Island Ferry vessel named for New York's first free Black community, which was settled in 1828 and served as a stop on the historic Underground Railroad. "I am honored to commission a new Staten Island Ferry named for a community of New Yorkers who represent the best of our city and our country," said **Mayor Adams**. "The settlers of Sandy Ground were our ancestors, and they worked hard to build a vibrant community that became a safe haven for so many seeking

freedom. This boat will forever be a testament to them, their legacy, and their contributions to the New York City we live in today.”

Sandy Ground’s history as a free Black community dates back to 1828, when ferry boat operator Captain John Jackson became the first Black person to own property on Staten Island, buying in what is now the South Shore community of Rossville. Over time, Sandy Ground was settled by Black oystermen who fled Maryland’s more restrictive laws. New York’s booming oyster trade allowed residents there to own their own property, boats, and businesses.

Five structures in the Sandy Ground community were designated as New York City landmarks by the Landmarks Preservation Commission in 2011, including three residential structures, a cemetery, and the A.M.E. Zion Church, which served as a major stop on the Underground Railroad. A.M.E. Zion remains an active church today, with descendants of Sandy Ground settlers still worshipping there.

A state-of-the-art, \$85 million, 4,500-person boat, the *Sandy Ground* is the second of three new ferries that will enter service this year, which are collectively known as the *Ollis*-class vessels. Together, the three boats represent a transformative upgrade for the nation’s busiest municipal ferry system; the three new ferries are larger, more modern, and better equipped for extreme weather than the existing fleet. They will feature popular design elements of past Staten Island ferries, phone charging outlets, and comfortable seating, as well as an oval upper-deck promenade that will, for the first time, serve as an outdoor “walking track” for riders. The *Sandy Ground* is expected to be in service by this spring.

“Sandy Ground, New York’s first free Black settlement, is rich with culture and is an integral part of Staten Island’s history in freedom and excellence,” said **New York State Senator Andrew Lanza**. “With today’s commissioning of the *Sandy Ground* ferry, we join together to celebrate and memorialize the story of Sandy Ground and we advance its mission to educate people about the history of its cherished grounds. The naming of this vessel the *Sandy Ground*, which I fought for, will allow us to pass on the lessons about who we are and who we must be, to future generations.”

“This is a wonderful tribute to actual Black history on Staten Island,” said **New York State Senator Diane Savino**. “The Sandy Ground settlement is a part of the rich and diverse history of African-Americans here, and the naming of our newest addition to the fleet is one of the highest honors we can bestow on this community, the legacy of Ferry Captain John Johnson and his neighbors. The Sandy Ground Historical Society is one of the jewels of this island. Congratulations to everyone who helped make this possible.”

“Today is the day we pay homage to Moses and Silas Harris, free Black men who in 1828 had the foresight to recognize the value of land and landownership,” said **Julie Moody Lewis, president, Sandy Ground Historical Society**. “They laid the foundation for a community that served as a safe haven for people of African descent, seeking the promise of the American dream and the right to all freedoms, including the right to education, occupation, and religion. We thank the City of New York for recognizing and embracing that vision, and ensuring that our history will always be a part of the fabric of the City of New York.”

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Briefs

NYC to scrap outdoor school mask mandate

New York City Mayor Eric Adams this week said he is excited about lifting the outdoor school mask mandate as it's the first step toward easing other Covid-19 restrictions citywide. "Now that we've done the right thing, vaccinations, wearing the masks, social distancing, it is time for us to slowly ease up on some of the mandates so we can get back to a level of normality," Adams said on NY1 on Friday. Students, staff and visitors will still be required to mask up indoors.

MTA slashes 2025 deficit forecast as state promises aid

Crain's New York reported that the Metropolitan Transportation Authority cut the size of its projected budget deficit in 2025 to \$500 million, roughly one-third of what it had expected, as the transit agency is poised to receive additional revenue from the state. The MTA previously estimated a \$1.4 billion shortfall in the operating budget for that year, when the federal pandemic aid that's helping balance the budget is set to run out. The smaller gap will reduce the need to borrow funds to cover operating expenses. The federal aid is expected to keep the agency from facing any budget shortfalls through 2024 despite the steep drop in ridership during the Covid-19 pandemic. Budget gaps will re-emerge once that lifeline ends, with the MTA facing an estimated \$2 billion deficit in 2026.

Council Confirms Corporation Counsel & DOI Commissioner

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams released the following statement after the New York City Council voted to confirm his nominees for Corporation Counsel and Department of Investigation (DOI) Commissioner: *"I thank the Council for recognizing the tremendous talent and experience Justice Hinds-Radix and Ms. Strauber will bring to their respective roles by voting to confirm them to lead the Law Department and the Department of Investigation today. I made a commitment that our administration will be guided by the values of accountability, transparency, and fidelity to the highest ethical standards. I look forward to working with these two individuals to ensure we live up to that commitment, and 'Get Stuff Done' on behalf of all New Yorkers."*

In a separate announcement, the Mayor stated that Andrew Kimball will serve as president and chief executive officer (CEO) of the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), Lindsay Greene will serve as CEO of the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation, Anne del Castillo will continue to serve as commissioner of the New York City Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME), and Clare Newman will continue to serve as president and CEO of The Trust for Governors Island.

Coming Up

New York State

Monday, February 28th

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

Senate Session, Remote, 3 p.m.

Tuesday, March 1st

Assembly Session, Remote, TBA

Senate Session, Remote, 3 p.m.

To Explore Financial Risks on Banking Posed by Climate Change

Joint - Senate Standing Committee on Banks, Finance, and Environmental Conservation

Remote, 11 a.m.

Wednesday, March 2nd

Assembly Session, Remote, TBA

Senate Session, Remote, 3 p.m.

Thursday, March 3rd

Assembly Session, Remote, TBA

Senate Session, Remote, 11 a.m.

Joint – Senate Standing Committee on Crime Victims, Crime and Correction & Ethics and Internal Governance - To Discuss the Impact of Sexual Assault in the Prison System. Remote, 2 p.m.

Friday, March 4th

Joint – Senate Standing Committee on New York City Education, Education, and Assembly Standing Committee on Education: Mayoral Control of the New York City School District. Remote, 10 a.m.

New York City

Monday, February 28th

Committee on General Welfare, Remote Hearing - Virtual Room 1, 10 a.m.; Oversight – Impact of the Expiration of the Eviction Moratoriums.

Committee on Immigration, Remote Hearing - Virtual Room 3, 10 a.m.; Oversight – COVID-19 in Immigration Detention Centers.

Committee on Governmental Operations, Remote Hearing - Virtual Room 2, 10:30 a.m.; Oversight – New York City’s Pro-Voter Law (Agency – Based Voter Registration)

Committee on Education, Remote Hearing - Virtual Room 4, 1 p.m.; Oversight – COVID Impact on English Language Learners (ELLs)

Wednesday, March 2nd

Committee on Finance, Remote Hearing - Virtual Room 1, 9 a.m.; Oversight – Preliminary Budget Hearing – Finance.

Thursday, March 3rd

Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and Dispositions, Remote Hearing - Virtual Room 2, 10 a.m.

Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, Remote Hearing - Virtual Room 2, 11 a.m.

Committee on Contracts, Remote Hearing - Virtual Room 1, 12 p.m.; Oversight – Preliminary Budget Hearing – Contracts

Friday, March 4th

Committee on Public Safety, Remote Hearing - Virtual Room 1, 10 a.m.; Oversight – Mayor’s Blueprint to End Gun Violence.

Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, Remote Hearing - Virtual Room 2, 10:30 a.m.; Oversight – Clean Streets and Expanding Vital Sanitation Service.

Committee on Youth Services, Remote Hearing - Virtual Room 2, 1 p.m.; Oversight – Summer 2022 Programming Readiness.

“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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