



# 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*



### **NYS Legislature Passes 10-Bill Gun Safety Package**



The State Senate and Assembly this week made good on their pledge to strengthen gun safety measures and “ensure deadly weapons stay out of the wrong hands,” passing a 10-bill gun safety package before the close of the regular session.

“Our nation has been brought to a moment of reckoning due to weapons of war that have been too easily accessed by those seeking to kill. These weapons have made places in our communities like schools, grocery stores, houses of worship, and concerts, places of carnage,” Senator Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said. “In these devastating times in New York and across the nation, we have worked with Governor Hochul, Speaker Heastie, and members of the Democratic Legislature to step up and send a message that this path of gun violence is unacceptable and we need real change.”

The proposed legislation will update the criminal code to make the threat of mass harm a crime; require microstamping of ammunition; strengthen measures to prevent those with criminal backgrounds from obtaining guns and ammunition; allow health care providers to file extreme risk protection orders; and strengthen regulations for high-capacity ammunition, feeding devices, and body armor. It would also more broadly define the term “firearm.”

“The horrific mass shootings in Buffalo and Uvalde have shown us, once again, that our country needs to have a conversation about the national obsession with guns. But it has also shown us that we cannot wait to take action,” Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie said. “Here in New York we are ready to act. This package of legislation will strengthen laws that we have on the books, help authorities better communicate with our federal partners about gun violence, work to address the role social media plays in violence and acts of domestic terrorism, and more.”

According to the leaders, less than halfway through 2022, the United States has already endured over 200 mass shootings, with guns ranking as the number one cause of death among kids and teens.

The measures were applauded by Governor Kathy Hochul who will sign the bills. She also called upon Congress to act.

“Shooting after shooting makes it clear that they must be even stronger to keep New Yorkers safe. This comprehensive package will close loopholes, give law enforcement the tools they need to prevent easy access to guns, and stop the sale of dangerous weapons to 18-year-olds. I am grateful to Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Speaker Heastie, and our partners in the legislature, and I look forward to signing these bills into law,” Governor Hochul said. "Even as we take action to protect New Yorkers, we recognize that this is a nationwide problem. I once again urge Congress to seize this moment and pass meaningful gun violence prevention measures. We have no time to waste."

The legislative package includes:

- **Requiring a Permit to Purchase a Semi-Automatic Rifle:** *S.9458/A10503* establishes a permit to purchase or take possession of semiautomatic rifles without affecting currently owned semi-automatic rifles. Permits are only available to people over the age of 21 and require a safety course and background checks.
- **Establishing New Crimes of Mass Harm:** *S89B/A6716-A* establishes the crime of making a threat of mass harm and aggravated threat of mass harm.
- **Requiring Ammunition Microstamping:** *S4116A/ A7926-A* requires semiautomatic pistols manufactured or delivered to any licensed dealer in this state to be capable of microstamping ammunition.
- **Strengthening Background Checks:** *S4970A/A1023-A* requires the creation and imposition of restrictive commercial practices and stringent recordkeeping and reporting to prevent gun and ammunition sales to individuals with a criminal record. Additionally, the bill requires firearms recovered by law enforcement to be reported to the criminal gun clearinghouse within 24 hours.
- **Bolstering Extreme Risk Protection Orders:** *S9113A/ A10502* authorizes certain health care providers to apply for an extreme risk protection order against a patient. The bill also requires police and district attorneys to apply for an extreme risk protection order if there is probable cause that a person poses a threat.
- **Penalizing Large Capacity Ammo and Feeding Devices:** *S9229A/A10428-A* eliminates the grandparenting of large capacity ammunition feeding devices that were lawfully possessed prior to the enactment of the Safe Act or manufactured prior to 1994.
- **Limiting the Use of Body Armor:** *S9407B/ A10497* makes unlawful the purchase and sale of body vests for anyone who is not engaged in an eligible profession. Eligible professions include law enforcement officers and other professions designated by the Department of State in consultation with other agencies.
- **Improving the Definition of Firearm:** *S9456/A10504* expands the definition of a "firearm" to include any weapon not defined in the Penal Law that is designed or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by action of an explosive.
- **Reporting Hateful Social Media:** *S4511A/A7865-A* requires social media networks to provide and maintain mechanisms for reporting hateful conduct on their platform.
- **Task Force on Social Media and Violent Extremism:** *S9465/A10501* creates a new Task Force on Social Media and Violent Extremism in the Attorney General's office to study and investigate the role of social media companies in promoting and facilitating violent extremism and domestic terrorism online.

# *In the News – New York City*



## **State Legislature Passes Bills to Reduce Class Sizes and Extend Mayoral Control of the New York City School District**

The State Legislature this week passed legislation to extend mayoral control of the New York City School District, to provide greater parental participation and accountability in relation to the management and operation of the school district, and to ensure the district is working towards achieving smaller class sizes.

The first of the two bills passed by the Legislature would extend mayoral control of the New York City School District for an additional two years, until June 30, 2024, while ensuring greater parental input and participation at the school level, community district level, and citywide level (A10499/ S9459).

Under the bill, the Panel for Education Policy (PEP) would be expanded from 15 to 23 members. Of the 23 members, one would be appointed by each of the five borough presidents, another five would be appointed by the presidents of the Community Education Council (CEC) and 13 would be appointed by the mayor. Of the mayor's 13 appointees, four must be a parent of a New York City School District student, including at least one parent of a student with an individualized education program (IEP), at least one parent of a student who is enrolled in a bilingual or English as a second language program, and at least one parent of a student in a District 75 school or program. This bill would also require that a PEP member only be removed by the appointing authority for good cause and clarifies that voting against an appointing authority's direction would not be considered cause for removal.

The second bill would ensure the New York City School District is working towards achieving smaller class sizes (A10498/S9460). Under this legislation, the chancellor together with teacher and principal unions would be required to approve a class size reduction plan with specific class size targets based on grade level that must be met for all classes by September 2027. The plan would be required to include any exemptions to the targets and would be limited to space, over enrollment of students, teacher license shortages, and severe economic distress.

The New York City School District would also be required to prepare an annual report to the commissioner of education on the status of its class size reduction plan. If the commissioner finds that the plan does not sufficiently decrease class sizes, the district would be required to submit a corrective action plan to the commissioner that must be developed and approved by both the chancellor and the teacher and principal unions.

The State Fiscal Year 2007-08 Enacted Budget established the Contracts for Excellence program, which required the New York City School District and other school districts to use a certain portion of their Foundation Aid on specific program initiatives meant to improve the performance of students with the greatest educational need. Among the allowable program initiatives was class reduction. Additionally, as part of this law, New York City was required to submit a five-year plan to the commissioner of education on reducing average class sizes, as defined by the commissioner of education. This legislation would continue to ensure that New York City is working to reduce its class sizes in all grades over the next five years.



## Mayor Adams Outlines his "City of Yes" Plan

New York City Mayor Eric Adams this week laid out a plan to use the City's zoning tools to support small businesses, create affordable housing, and promote sustainability—part of his vision for New York to become a “City of Yes.”

The plan includes three major citywide amendments (Zoning for Economic Opportunity, Zoning for Housing Opportunity, and Zoning for Zero Carbon); an effort to invest in and plan around emerging job hubs and commercial corridors in all five boroughs (starting in the Bronx); and initiatives to cut red tape.

The first citywide text amendment—Zoning for Economic Opportunity—will provide local businesses with the flexibility to repurpose their space for a post-pandemic city. This amendment will:

- Remove unnecessary geographic limitations on certain businesses, including life sciences, custom manufacturing, maker-retail, and nightlife.
- Eliminate obstacles to repurposing space, allowing the city's businesses and economy to evolve over time; and
- Create flexibility for local businesses to expand without relocation and without triggering needs for additional parking.

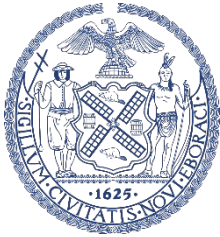
The second citywide text amendment—Zoning for Housing Opportunity—will encourage the creation of more housing in neighborhoods across the entire city. This amendment will:

- Expand opportunities for affordable and supportive homes for New Yorkers by increasing the floor area ratio for all types of affordable housing, similar to the allowance already afforded to affordable housing for seniors.
- Broaden the acceptable variety of housing types and sizes, including studios, to accommodate a wider range of families and households.
- Ease conversions of underutilized commercial buildings into homes.
- Reduce unnecessary parking requirements that add cost and take up space in buildings that could be used for additional homes.

The final citywide text amendment—Zoning for Zero Carbon—represents a critical step towards New York City reaching its carbon reduction goals. This amendment will:

- Remove obstacles to deploying new clean energy storage and uses, including electric vehicle charging.
- Facilitate building retrofits for sustainability, including allowing more rooftop coverage for solar panels.
- Eliminate barriers to the electrification of building systems such as heat pumps or efficient HVAC systems.

The Adams administration will also continue delivering on its commitment to invest in growing business districts and emerging job hubs across all five boroughs with a planning effort around coming Metro-North train stations in the Bronx.



## **Adams Administration Celebrates Passage of the NYCHA Public Housing Preservation Trust Legislation**

The Adams Administration this week celebrated the State Legislature’s passage of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Public Housing Preservation Trust legislation, A7805D/S9409A. The bill passed the New York State Senate this week, 38-25, after passing the Assembly on a 132-18 vote.

“For decades, NYCHA residents have been promised repair after repair that never materialized, but, with the Public Housing Preservation Trust, we will finally deliver on those promises and offer NYCHA residents the dignity and safe, high-quality, affordable homes they deserve,” said Mayor Eric Adams.

The Preservation Trust would be a new public entity that would “unlock billions of dollars in federal funding” to accelerate repairs and make investments for NYCHA residents across all five boroughs. The legislation would keep NYCHA residents at the center of the Trust’s implementation process, preserving all resident rights and protections, including a guarantee that no NYCHA resident will have to pay more than 30 percent of their income towards rent. According to the Administration, NYCHA needs over \$40 billion to fully restore and renovate all its buildings.

The legislation also includes changes recommended by resident leaders, including:

- A “first-in-the-country” resident opt-in voting process, under which residents will have the right to vote on any proposed changes to their development;
- Resident participation in vendor selection; and
- Resident representation on quality assurance committees.

According to the Mayor, passage of the Trust would allow NYCHA to double the amount of federal subsidy it receives while remaining entirely public by switching to project-based Tenant Protection Voucher funding. It will also provide NYCHA with improved procurement rules that would reduce costs, speed up construction timelines, and allow faster responses to resident requests.

NYCHA would continue to own all residential complexes and the land on which they are built, with NYCHA employees continuing to manage the properties. The Trust would have a publicly appointed nine-member board, which includes four resident members.

"This is a major win for New Yorkers who call NYCHA home," Governor Kathy Hochul said. "This legislation has the power to unlock additional federal funding and lead to billions of dollars in renovations — after decades of federal disinvestment — and provide for critical improvements at developments across the city. My administration has been working closely with City Hall, community groups, and local leaders to find real solutions to deliver support to NYCHA residents."

## *Briefs*

### **Governor Hochul Announces Start of Statewide Gas and Diesel Tax Holiday**

The temporary suspension of certain taxes on motor fuel and diesel motor fuel took effect Wednesday, June 1<sup>st</sup>. The motor fuel excise tax, State sales tax, and Metropolitan Commuter Transportation District sales tax on motor fuel will be suspended through the end of the year. Gas taxes will be reduced by at least \$0.16 per gallon statewide, with some counties providing additional savings per gallon.

Twenty-five counties across the State have also taken action to set temporary caps on the sales tax charged per gallon of gas and diesel. This program was authorized as part of the State's FY 2023 Enacted Budget.

Beginning Wednesday, Delaware, Dutchess, Erie, Monroe, Putnam, Rockland, Saratoga, Schenectady, Ulster, Wayne and Yates counties will collect tax only on the first \$2 charged per gallon of gas and diesel, regardless of the actual price at the pump. Seneca County had previously capped its local sales tax in the same manner and continues to.

Allegany, Broome, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Jefferson, Livingston, Nassau, Niagara, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, Suffolk and Westchester counties will collect tax only on the first \$3 charged per gallon of gas and diesel, regardless of the actual price at the pump.

These actions will save New Yorkers additional cents per gallon with each customer's specific savings depending on the local sales tax rate and the difference between the price per gallon and the local cap. Area-specific local sales tax rates on certain motor fuels can be viewed [here](#).

## **Mayor Adams Announces Formation of Gun Violence Prevention Task Force**

The Adams Administration this week announced the formation of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, a multiagency effort to address the root causes of gun violence and prevent shootings before they take place. The new task force—formalized in [Executive Order 19 \(EO19\)](#)—will be co-chaired by Man Up! Inc. CEO and founder A.T. Mitchell and Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives Sheena Wright.

Members will include First Deputy Mayor Lorraine Grillo, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety Phillip Banks, Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi, Deputy Mayor for Workforce Development Maria Torres-Springer, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Anne Williams-Isom, New York City Police Department (NYPD) Commissioner Keechant L. Sewell, New York City Department of Education (DOE) Chancellor David Banks, Chief Housing Officer Jessica Katz, and members of various city agencies.

The task force will also work in close partnership with the Crisis Management System (CMS), which deploys credible messengers to mediate and de-escalate disputes before they become violent. CMS providers have proven to be successful in driving down gun violence in areas where they have been deployed: Between 2010 and 2019, program areas have seen a 40 percent reduction in shootings, compared to 31 percent in other areas.

Mayor Adams also announced that each city agency shall designate an anti-gun violence liaison.

## **Council Votes to Require Inspections for Self-Closing Doors in Residential Buildings**

The City Council this week voted on legislation requiring inspections for self-closing doors in residential buildings. It is an additional fire safety measure to prevent fire tragedies, complementing the recent [legislative package](#) passed at the May 19<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting and signed into law this week. In total, the bills passed by the Council are intended to strengthen fire safety in residences throughout New York City, in the aftermath of the January 9<sup>th</sup> Twin Parks tragic fire in the Bronx.

Introduction 208-A, sponsored by Council Member Nantasha Williams, seeks to improve the inspection processes for self-closing doors, and to increase the instances where self-closing doors and noncompliance with other fire safety laws might be identified, by requiring Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY) to share data regarding fire safety violations, and for each agency to use that data to better inform their building inspection protocols. This bill also requires HPD to take a more proactive role in inspecting for self-closing door compliance. Each year, HPD would have to select 300 buildings to inspect, with the aim of targeting higher risk buildings, like Twin Parks.

# Coming Up

## *New York State*

*No Scheduled Hearings*

## *New York City*

*Tuesday, June 7<sup>th</sup>*

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

*Committee on Housing and Buildings*, Remote Hearing – Virtual Room 4, 10 a.m.

*Committee on Environmental Protection*, Remote Hearing – Virtual Room 3, 12 p.m.  
Oversight – Phase Out of No. 4 Fuel Oil.

*Committee on Parks and Recreation*, Remote Hearing – Virtual Room 1, 12 p.m.

*Wednesday, June 8<sup>th</sup>*

*Committee on Higher Education*, Remote Hearing – Virtual Room 1, 10 a.m.  
Oversight – Examining Antisemitism on College Campuses.

*Thursday, June 9<sup>th</sup>*

*Committee on Small Business*, Remote Hearing – Virtual Room 1, 10 a.m.  
Oversight – Combatting Commercial Vacancies.

*Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections*, Hybrid Hearing – Council Chambers – City Hall, 10:30 a.m.

*Friday, June 10<sup>th</sup>*

*Committee on Consumer and Worker Protection*, Remote Hearing – Virtual Room 1, 1 p.m.  
Oversight – Con Edison Price Increases.



**“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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