



# This Week in New York

**Covering New York State and City Government**  
*A Publication of Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC*  
*April 28, 2023 Edition*



*“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*

### Ready, Set, Go.....

#### 2023 NYS Legislative Session Days Remaining

MAY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

JUNE						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

As Governor Kathy Hochul outlined the conceptual agreement on New York’s FY2024 Budget last night, two things came to mind: 1) When is the bill language going to be available, and 2) There’s only six weeks before the scheduled end of the legislative session. So much to do, so little time.

After spending the next week or so sifting through thousands of pages of budget bills, stakeholders will then gear up for a four-week legislative push.

According to Governor Hochul, the FY24 New York State budget will come in at approximately \$229 billion, \$2 billion more than she proposed in February. It is headlined by reform of the State’s bail law to remove the “least restrictive” requirement; historic increases in Medicaid rates; a statewide minimum wage increase; a Metropolitan Transportation Authority funding plan fueled by increased payroll taxes in New York City, increased fares, and an increase in the City’s paratransit contribution; reopening twenty-two “zombie” charter schools across New York; and a statewide all electric buildings plan to begin in 2025.

Throughout the negotiations, the legislative leaders pushed back against the policy issues contained in the Executive spending plan, preferring to address these issues outside of the budget. However, with the fleeting remains of the legislative session, questions mount as to how much can be completed after the budget.

In her budget press conference, Governor Hochul alluded to a housing-related Executive Order to be announced after the budget.

Operations, Capital Projects, Legislative and Judiciary and Debt Service. Accompanying the appropriation bills are five Article VII bills: Public Protection and General Government; Education, Labor and Family Assistance; Health and Mental Hygiene; Transportation, Economic Development and Environmental Conservation; and Revenue.

One of the ten bills has been passed to date. Debt Service was passed before the start of the State's fiscal year on April 1<sup>st</sup> to fully fund New York's debt obligations. As of publication, the nine outstanding budget bills have not been amended with the conceptual agreement.

The houses are in recess at the call of the respective leaders and the next scheduled session day is Monday, May 1<sup>st</sup>.



## **Comptroller DiNapoli Reviews State's Paid Family Leave Program**

### ***Employees Earning Under \$40K had Largest Number of Claims***

Payments under New York's Paid Family Leave (PFL) program rose steadily between 2018 and 2021 as the amount of allowable time off and weekly cash benefits increased. Almost eight million workers were covered under PFL, with \$872 million paid on approximately 156,000 claims in 2021, the latest year for which PFL data is available from the state Department of Financial Services, according to an analysis by State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli.

In 2021 an estimated 88% of employees in the private sector in New York had access to paid family leave benefits, much higher than 29% for the Northeast Census Region and 23% for the United States, according to the Comptroller.

An analysis of claims data from the first four years of the program indicates:

- Employees earning less than \$40,000 per year accounted for the largest number of claims, with the number decreasing as income rises, suggesting paid family leave is a particularly important benefit to low-to moderate-income employees.
- Participating insurers approved over 550,000 claims and paid over \$2.2 billion in cash benefits.
- Bonding with a newborn child generated over 80% of all payments and more than 70% of all claims.
- Women filed and received about two-thirds of all program claims and payments.
- Service employees – such as health care, education, information and legal services workers – accounted for nearly 45% of all claims by industry.

PFL provides paid time off for eligible employees who are caring for a family member with a serious health condition; bonding with a newborn, newly adopted or foster child; or assisting a family member deployed abroad on active military service. The program began providing benefits on Jan. 1, 2018; maximum weeks of leave and percentages of weekly benefit payments were phased in over four years by January 1, 2021.

# *In the News-New York City*



## **Adams Administration Releases Largest Executive Budget in NYC History**

New York City Mayor Eric Adams this week released New York City's \$106.7 billion [Fiscal Year 2024 \(FY24\) Executive Budget](#), driven by better-than-anticipated growth in personal income tax, business tax, and sales taxes.

Under the plan, FY23 and FY24 remain balanced, with outyear gaps of \$4.2 billion, \$6.0 billion, and \$7.0 billion in fiscal years 2025 through 2027, respectively. According to the Mayor, growth of \$4.0 billion in FY24 over the Preliminary Budget is driven by asylum seeker costs and funding labor settlements with the city's workforce.

Tax revenues increased by \$2.1 billion in FY23 and \$2.3 billion in FY24, driven by better-than-anticipated growth in personal income tax, business tax, and sales taxes and helping to balance the FY24 plan. According to the Mayor, financial experts widely predict an economic slowdown later this year, which will in turn slow city tax revenue growth in the outyears.

"Our Fiscal Year 2024 Executive Budget prioritizes our working people's agenda and keeps our city working for the benefit of all New Yorkers. But the challenges we face are real — including the costs of the asylum seeker crisis, the need to fund labor deals, and slowing tax revenue growth — and we must budget wisely," said Mayor Adams.

In the last few months, Mayor Adams also announced labor agreements with District Council 37 and the Police Benevolent Association, which set the economic framework for labor deals with the city's workforce. The total additional cost of reaching agreements with the city's remaining unionized workforce is expected to be approximately \$16 billion over the duration of the financial plan.

Earlier this year, Mayor Adams implemented a Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG) which achieved \$1.6 billion in savings across FY23 and FY24 without laying off a single employee or cutting any services. This PEG was applied strategically, maintaining services for libraries and cultural institutions, and reducing targets for the Fire Department of the City of New York, the New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY), the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, the New York City Department of Youth & Community Development, the New York City Human Resources Administration, and the New York City Department of Homeless Services. The administration continues to work with agencies to identify ways to operate more efficiently while delivering effective services to all New Yorkers.

The FY24 investments include:

**Working Class Initiatives**

- Increasing outreach to New Yorkers about cash assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, Medicaid, and more with [New York City benefits](#).
- Adding more attorneys and specialists to the New York City Commission on Human Rights' [Source of Income Unit](#) to assist New Yorkers who rely on housing vouchers.
- Expanding free broadband access from 129 to 202 New York City Housing Authority developments.
- Adding child care, workforce, and business portals online, and increasing the capabilities of the [MyCity platform](#).

**Mental Health Resources:**

- Baseline funding and continuing the expansion of the [Behavioral Health Emergency Assistance Response Division \(B-HEARD\) program into the remainder of the Bronx](#), as well as additional high-need neighborhoods in other boroughs.
- Supporting mental health services for children in family shelters via telehealth as part of the “Housing Our Neighbors” blueprint.
- Developing digital access to mental health support, in collaboration with New York state, to consolidate and streamline how New Yorkers with serious mental illness access services.
- Increasing the capacity of clubhouses that provide peer-led support in high-need areas citywide.
- Launching the School Tele-Mental Health program that gives high school students access to telehealth services.
- 

**College-to-Career:**

- Supporting the [City University of New York's \(CUNY\) Inclusive Economy Initiative programs](#) (\$4.8 million), including:
  - Supporting its Industry-Campus Backbone Initiative, in which staff engage with employers to secure industry-specific internships and job opportunities.
  - Investing in the Boosting CUNY Career Capacity program, which links students with industry experts who give academic and career advice.
- Investing in the Medgar Evers College Brooklyn Recovery Corps, which connects 200 students a year with nonprofits and small businesses in Brooklyn to work on projects that spur economic recovery and growth.
- Funding and expanding the CUNY Reconnect program, which helps students who left CUNY because of extenuating circumstances return and earn their degree.
- Supporting the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities' plan to promote workforce development for people living with disabilities.



## Rent Guidelines Board Readies for May 2<sup>nd</sup> Preliminary Vote

The Rent Guidelines Board will take its preliminary vote on Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, giving the City's renters an inkling as to what the October 1<sup>st</sup> rents could look like.

The nine-member board--charged with establishing permissible rent increases for all housing units that are subject to rent stabilization--is appointed by the Mayor, with two members representing tenants, two members representing landlords, and five members representing the public at large.

Each year, the NYC RGB establishes the lease guidelines for rent stabilized apartments, lofts, and hotels. Those guidelines then apply to leases with effective dates between October 1 of that year and September 30 of the following year.

The RGB takes two votes: a preliminary vote (next Tuesday, May 2), at which the board will set a range of potential rent hikes; and a final vote that will determine rent increases for leases in the year that begins October 1. The impacted housing includes 1,006,000 rent-stabilized apartments — as of 2021, according to the latest Housing and Vacancy Survey as cited in *The City*.

The Rent Stabilization Law (RSL) sets forth the factors that must be considered by the Board prior to the adoption of rent guidelines. These include:

- the economic condition of the residential real estate industry in N.Y.C. including such factors as the prevailing and projected:
  - i. real estate taxes and sewer and water rates
  - ii. gross operating maintenance costs (including insurance rates, governmental fees, cost of fuel and labor costs)
  - iii. costs and availability of financing (including effective rates of interest)
  - iv. over-all supply of housing accommodations and over-all vacancy rates
- relevant data from the current and projected cost of living indices for the affected area
- such other data as may be made available to it.

To capture these data points, the RGB's research staff prepares four reports:

- [2023 Price Index of Operating Costs \(PIOC\)](#) (Released 4/20/2023)
- [2023 Mortgage Survey Report](#) (Released 4/20/2023)
- [2023 Income and Affordability Study](#) (Released 4/13/2023)
- [2023 Income and Expense Study](#) (Released 3/30/2023)

The Law also requires the RGB to hold a public hearing before voting. In 2023, the Board had six hearings scheduled, with yesterday's hearing providing both tenants and residents the opportunity to testify on the upcoming rates. The final meeting for 2023 will be held on Thursday, May 25<sup>th</sup>.

In the past three decades, the board has set maximum lease price increases from 0% to 9.5% for one- and two-year leases, according to a review of the RGB records in *The City*.





## Bills Approved by the City Council

**Introduction 190-A--Sponsored by Public Advocate Jumaane Williams--**Requires the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) to create a bill of rights which would inform individuals experiencing homelessness of rights and services available to them.

**Introduction 273-B--Sponsored by Council Member Mercedes Narcisse--**Requires NYPD officers to be trained in recognizing and responding to individuals with autism spectrum disorder.

**Introduction 704-A--Sponsored by Council Member Shaun Abreu--**Provides landlords the option to receive payments for rental assistance programs, like CityFHEPS, via an electronic transfer into their bank accounts.

**Introduction 854-A--Sponsored by Council Member Selvena N. Brooks-Powers--**Requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) to implement “daylighting”—a street design intervention whereby vehicles are prevented from occupying certain areas near an intersection in order to expand sightlines for approaching motorists—at no less than 100 dangerous street intersections per year beginning in 2025.

**Introduction 679-A--Sponsored by Council Member Rita Joseph--**Requires the installation of traffic calming devices within senior pedestrian zones to safely slow or reduce traffic in areas of the City that are especially dangerous to senior pedestrians.

**Introduction 805-A--Sponsored by Public Advocate Jumaane Williams--**Accelerates the timeline for the DOT to undertake its comprehensive study of all traffic crashes involving a pedestrian fatality or serious injury and to provide such study to all community boards.

**Introduction 891-A--Sponsored by Council Member Rafael Salamanca--**Authorizes sports venues to conduct gaming for charitable purposes during professional and collegiate sporting competitions, from two hours before the beginning of play until the end of play. Venues like Yankee Stadium and Citi Field would be able to host games of chance operated by an authorized, charitable organization.

## Briefs

### NYS Attorney General Proposes Legislation to Combat Deed Theft

New York Attorney General Letitia James, State Senator Brian Kavanagh, State Senator Zellnor Myrie, and Assemblymember Helene Weinstein this week announced new legislation to strengthen protections and remedies for victims of deed theft and bolster the Office of the Attorney General’s (OAG) ability to prosecute these crimes.

According to the Attorney General, from 2014 to the present, the New York City Sheriff's Office counted nearly 3,500 complaints of deed theft throughout New York City, with more than 1,500 complaints in Brooklyn and 1,000 from Queens. In addition, District Attorneys in Albany, Erie, Monroe, and Onondaga Counties have reported recent active deed theft complaints.

The initiatives include:

**[S6569](#): OAG Program Bill sponsored by State Senator Myrie**

**Establish a Crime of Deed Theft as follows:**

- Deed Theft in the Second Degree, a Class C Felony: Theft of one real property.
- Deed Theft in the First Degree, a Class B Felony: Theft of one residential real property or the theft of two or more real properties. The maximum penalty for Deed Theft in the First Degree would be a mandatory sentence of one to three years in prison, up to 25 years.
- Grants OAG concurrent original jurisdiction to prosecute deed theft crimes alongside District Attorneys throughout the state.

**[S6577/A6656](#): Sponsored by State Senator Kavanagh and Assemblymember Weinstein**

**Void Good Faith Purchaser Protections**

- Enables prosecutors to file a legal action on properties where a deed theft has taken place or suspected, which acts as a sort of legal "red flag" on the property's records.
- Stay an eviction proceeding in housing court when the rightful homeowner can show reasonable evidence that there is an issue with the title of the property or a potential deed theft in progress.
- Expand the protections of Homeowner Equity Theft Prevention Act (HETPA) to include homeowners with active utility liens.

## **NYS Court of Appeals Rules Against NYC Taxi Owners in Medallion Lawsuit**

NYS Taxi medallion owners cannot sue the City of New York for loss of value due to the expansion of rider share services, according to a Court of Appeals [decision](#) released this week.

Plaintiffs, who purchased yellow cab medallions from defendant Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) at a 2013 auction, asserted that that TLC and the City breached the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing by failing to enforce certain licensing requirements against popular smartphone app-based competitors like Uber Technologies, Inc. (Uber) and Lyft, Inc. (Lyft).

However, the Court disagreed, ruling 5-0, that City was under no obligation to keep in place any rules limiting the ridesharing, even after the medallion sale.

"We're gratified that the state's highest court has put to bed the claims of taxi medallion purchasers that the city was required to preserve the value of their medallions by thwarting ride-hailing apps' growth-at-any-cost business strategy," according to a spokesman for the City Department of Law.

## **Mayor Adams Appoints Jimmy Oddo Department of Buildings Commissioner**

New York City Mayor Eric Adams this week appointed Jimmy Oddo as the Commissioner for the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB). DOB Acting Commissioner Kazimir Vilenchik, P.E. will return to his previous role as the agency's first deputy commissioner.

At DOB, Oddo will accelerate the administration's work of protecting construction workers and at-risk buildings, supporting the small businesses driving the city's economic recovery, and implementing New York City's nation-leading sustainability laws, including Local Law 97.

At DSS, Park will build on current work, helping New Yorkers experiencing unsheltered homelessness get connected to shelter, overseeing a range of public assistance programs to serve the most vulnerable, and responding to the continued asylum seeker crisis that New York City faces.

Jimmy Oddo joins the Department of Buildings after serving in the Adams administration as chief of staff to Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi since January 2022. In his role as chief of staff, Oddo helped oversee the city's infrastructure agencies, including DOB, DEP, and the Department of Design and Construction.

From 2014 to 2022, Oddo served as Staten Island borough president, where he drove initiatives focused on public safety, education, health, land use, and transportation, among other areas. Previously, he represented parts of Staten Island and Brooklyn in the New York City Council between 1999 to 2013, including serving as the Council's minority leader beginning in 2002.

Oddo received a Juris Doctor from New York Law School and a bachelor's degree in history from Fordham University.

## **Molly Wasow Park Appointed Department of Social Services Commissioner**

Molly Wasow Park was appointed by Mayor Eric Adams this week as the Commissioner for the New York City Department of Social Services (DSS). She was appointed by Mayor Eric Adams as acting DSS commissioner in March of 2023.A.

Before joining Department of Homeless Services in 2019, Park spent three years as Deputy Commissioner for Development at the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). Park served as HPD's deputy commissioner of budget, fiscal, and performance management, including oversight of one of the nation's largest Section 8 programs.

Park is a graduate of Amherst College. She also holds a master's degree in public policy from the University of California – Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy.



# Coming Up

## ***New York State***

### ***Monday, May 1<sup>st</sup>***

***Assembly Session***, New York State Capitol Building, Assembly Chamber, Albany, 2 p.m.

***Senate Session***, New York State Capitol Building, Senate Chamber, Albany, 3 p.m.

### ***Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>***

***Assembly Session***, New York State Capitol Building, Assembly Chamber, Albany, TBD

***Senate Session***, New York State Capitol Building, Senate Chamber, Albany, TBD

### ***Wednesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>***

***Assembly Session***, New York State Capitol Building, Assembly Chamber, Albany, TBD

***Senate Session***, New York State Capitol Building, Senate Chamber, Albany, TBD

### ***To Examine School Policies Related to Discipline and Suspension and to Hear from Stakeholders about Proposed Legislation, S. 1040 "Solutions Not Suspensions Act"***

Joint - Senate Standing Committee on Education & New York City Education

Van Buren Hearing Room A, Legislative Office Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Albany, 1 p.m.

## ***New York City***

### ***Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>***

***Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises***, 250 Broadway - Committee Room, 14th Floor, 11 a.m.

### ***Wednesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>***

***Committee on Housing and Buildings***, Council Chambers - City Hall, 10 a.m.

Oversight - Homeownership Opportunities and Development Programs.

***Joint - Committee on Technology & Civil and Human Rights***, Council Chambers - City Hall, 1 p.m.

Oversight - The Use of Biometric Identification Systems in New York City.

### ***Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup>***

***Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities and Addiction***, Council Chambers - City Hall, 10 a.m.

***Committee on Land Use***, 250 Broadway - Committee Room, 14th Floor, 11 a.m.

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**120 Broadway, 28th Floor**  
**New York, New York 10271**  
Telephone (212) 652-3890  
Facsimile (212) 652-3891

**111 Washington Avenue, St. 401**  
**Albany, New York 12210**  
Telephone (518) 449-3320  
Facsimile (518) 449-5812

**1220 19<sup>th</sup> Street NW**  
**Washington, D.C. 20036**  
Telephone (202) 964-4753  
Facsimile (202) 964-5754