



This Week in New York

Covering New York State and City Government

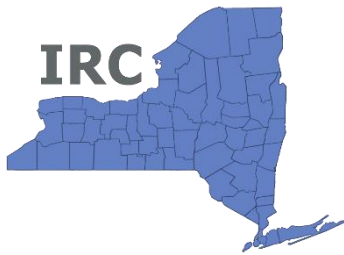
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July 16, 2021 Edition



“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 Independent Redistricting Commission Readies to Draw the Lines

Launches New Website and Announces Virtual Hearing Schedule

The Commissioners of the NYS Independent Redistricting Commission this week announced a new website and a virtual hearings schedule, launching the public engagement process of their charge to develop the new State Legislative and Congressional district lines. The official US Census Bureau data will be available in August and the Commission will release its first draft map in mid-September.

“...We have created a process that we hope maximizes the opportunities for all New Yorkers to describe their communities and articulate how their districts can be improved,” said Commission Chair David Imamura.

Following the virtual hearings and the release of the official census data the Commission will release the first redistricting proposal to the public on September 15th. The Commission will then schedule the constitutionally required hearings for additional public input on the proposed map in the fall.

Under the State Constitution, the Independent Redistricting Commission is charged with drawing the lines for the representational Legislative and Congressional districts every 10 years based upon US Census Data. The Commission is composed of 10 members: two are appointed by the Senate Majority Leader, two are appointed by the State Senate Minority Leader, two are appointed by the Speaker of the State Assembly, and two are appointed by the Assembly Minority Leader. The final two members are then selected by these eight appointees. Neither can be enrolled as a Democrat or Republican in the past five years. The Commission members must submit a redistricting plan to the Legislature by January 1st.

Through the website, www.nyirc.gov, residents will be able to sign up to participate in hearings, submit their community of interest in writing, or submit their own map of their community.

The following hearings will be live streamed on the Commission's website:

Tuesday July 20 th	Nassau/Suffolk counties at 2 p.m.
Thursday July 22 nd	Queens county at 2 p.m.
Monday July 26 th	Bronx/New York counties at 2 p.m.
Thursday July 29 th	Kings and Richmond counties at 2 p.m.
Monday August 2 nd	Mid-Hudson Valley/Capital Region at 2 p.m.
Thursday August 5 th	North Country/Mohawk Valley regions at 2 p.m.
Monday August 9 th	Southern Tier/Central NY regions at 2 p.m.
Thursday August 12 th	Finger Lakes/Western NY regions at 2 p.m.

The Commissioners of the NYS Independent Redistricting Commission are: David Imamura-Chair; Jack Martins-Vice Chair; Eugene Benger; Ross Brady; John Conway; Elaine Frazier; John Flateau; Charles Nesbitt; Willis Stephens, and Ivelisse Cuevas-Molina.



Chapters of the Laws of 2021

Chapter 239 -- Sponsored by M of A Burgos/Senator Comrie -- Includes electronic messaging texts as a form of telemarketing communication.

Chapter 240 -- Sponsored by M of A Jones/Senator -- Repeals provisions of law prohibiting the practice of barbering on Sunday.

Bills Currently in the Governor's Office

A2168 -- Sponsored by M of A Jacobson/Senator Mayer -- Requires the State Board of Elections to post at the entrance of the old polling location a notice on yellow paper informing voters that the polling place has been moved and the street address of the new location.

A3496 -- Sponsored by M of A Hevesi/Senator Persaud -- Established the definition of "kinship caregiver."

A6046 -- Sponsored by M of A Bichotte Hermelyn/Senator Jackson -- Allows electronic applications for absentee ballots through December 31, 2021.

A6047A -- Sponsored by M of A Bichotte Hermelyn/Senator Gianaris -- Temporarily eliminates the need to request an absentee ballot via a signed absentee ballot application and allows absentee ballots with a postmark/cancellation mark by the day of election to be rendered a timely ballot.

A7478 -- Sponsored by M of A Cusick/Senator Myrie -- Increases the number of registrants an election district may contain with the approval of the county board of elections.

A7578A -- Sponsored by M of A Paulin/Senator Comrie -- Authorizes the metropolitan transportation authority and its subsidiaries to fingerprint applicants for employment and to obtain criminal histories of such applicants.

A7671 -- Sponsored by M of A Pheffer Amato/Senator Kavanagh -- Requires limited-profit housing companies (Mitchell-Lama housing companies), to provide a written statement of the current value of a tenant-cooperator's shares and equity in the housing company upon request of the tenant-cooperator.

A7707A -- Sponsored by M of A Paulin/M of A Comrie -- Allows the Metropolitan Transportation Authority MTA to use electronic bidding for public work contracts.

S264 -- Sponsored by Senator Myrie/M of A Taylor -- Requires that time deadlines for mailing absentee ballot applications must take account of USPS guidelines for ensuring the timely delivery of mail.

S613A -- Sponsored by Senator May/M of A Niou -- Allows a candidate who has lost a primary to be removed from the ballot as a candidate for a different party.

S1644 -- Sponsored by Senator Cooney/M of A Lunsford -- Requires the boards of elections to mail or deliver absentee ballots to voters residing in nursing homes, residential care facilities, and other facilities under the jurisdiction of the department of mental hygiene, in the same manner as absentee ballots are delivered to other absentee voters. Inspectors shall not physically visit or deliver ballots to these facilities for any election prior to December 1, 2021.

S4345A -- Sponsored by Senator Brouk/M of A Abinanti -- Allows children's overnight camps, summer day camps, traveling summer day camps and camps for children with developmental disabilities to employ certain licensed professionals in order to better serve the mental and physical needs of children during their summer camp experience.

In the News – City



Mayor de Blasio Calls on MTA to Expedite Congestion Pricing Launch

Mayor Bill de Blasio this week called on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to expedite the City's congestion pricing plan, which will charge private vehicles for entering Manhattan's Central Business District.

To back up his call to action, Mayor de Blasio publicly recommended the City's Department of Finance Commissioner Sherif Soliman to the plan's 6-member Traffic Mobility Review Board (TMRB).

The six-member Traffic Mobility Review Board, created by the 2019 congestion pricing law, is charged with soliciting public input on congestion pricing program parameters and making recommendations on toll amounts, exemptions, discounts, and other program elements to the MTA Board for approval. The TMRB's members are appointed by the MTA, with the requirement that one member is recommended by the New York City Mayor, one member resides in the Long Island Rail Road region, and one member resides in the Metro North region. The law also requires that members have experience in at least one of the following areas: public finance, transportation, mass transit, or management.

In addition, the Mayor urged the MTA to follow a more aggressive timeline for the congestion pricing launch, including:

- Immediately appointing and convening the Traffic Mobility Review Board (TRMB).
- Expediting the Environmental Assessment, Traffic Mobility Review Board recommendations, final MTA action including all pricing, exemptions, design and testing, to be completed at the latest by next June, for implementation in 2022.
- Putting shovels in the ground by this time next year, with full implementation of congestion pricing in 2022.

Under the congestion-pricing proposal for New York City, originally established as part of the 2019 State budget, drivers would be charged a once-daily variable toll for vehicles entering or remaining within the "Central Business District," an area stretching from 60th Street in Midtown to Battery Park.

The stated goals of the plan include reducing traffic congestion, improving air quality, generating sustainable capital funding for transit, increasing transit ridership, and improving transit services for low-income residents.

New York officials estimate the plan would generate \$15 billion over four years for the MTA for improvements in the existing transit system.



City & Municipal Labor Committee Agree on Benefits for City Retirees

Mayor Bill de Blasio, Labor Relations Commissioner Renee Campion, and the Municipal Labor Committee (MLC) this week announced an agreement to implement the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Program, a health program for City retirees, beginning January 1, 2022.

Implementing the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Program will save approximately \$600 million annually in health care costs. Approximately 250,000 retired civil servants will be eligible for the premium-free program.

According to the Mayor, the City and the Municipal Labor Committee selected an alliance between Anthem Blue Cross and Emblem Health to provide the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Program. This provides continuity for the majority of employees and retirees who are currently enrolled in the City's health programs. The program is rated four stars by Medicare.

The change has been met with some union opposition, including the United Federation of Teachers and CUNY’s Professional Staff Congress, according to published reports.

“We know that change can be difficult, but we are confident that this will be implemented with little disruption and that the City will continue to provide high quality healthcare to its over 1.2 million active employees, retirees, and dependents,” said Commissioner Campion.

MLC Chair Harry Nespoli noted the advantages of the change, saying there will be "a cap on individual out-pocket-expenses for covered services.”

“Many families in the metropolitan area and across the country are paying thousands of dollars every year as their share of the costs of the health insurance that they get from their employers," he said in a statement. "Maintaining our members’ access to premium-free health care is a key priority of the MLC..."

The plan must follow Medicare rules and provide all benefits provided by Medicare. The plan will not only cover all the traditional Medicare benefits as well as the benefits covered by the Senior Care supplemental plan, but will also add new benefits including 24 trips to doctors’ offices, home meals delivery for patients after they are discharged from the hospital, and a fitness program.

Briefs

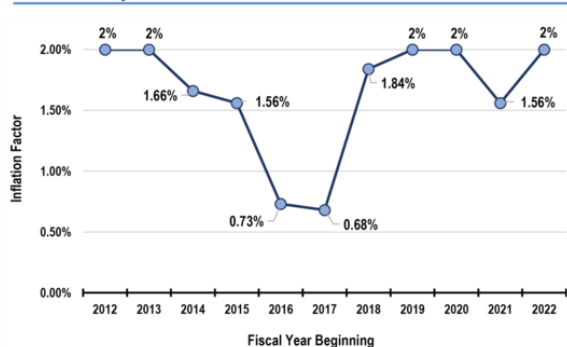
Comptroller DiNapoli: Local Tax Cap Will Be Two Percent in 2022

Property tax levy growth will be capped at 2% for 2022 for local governments that operate on a calendar-based fiscal year, State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli announced this week. This figure affects tax cap calculations for all counties, towns, and fire districts, as well as 44 cities and 13 villages.

The tax cap, which first applied to local governments and school districts in 2012, limits annual tax levy increases to the lesser of the rate of inflation or 2% with certain exceptions, including a provision that allows municipalities to override the tax cap.

In 2021, the allowable levy growth was 1.56%.

Allowable Levy Growth Factor for Calendar Fiscal Year Local Governments



Governor Signs Legislation Protecting New Yorkers from Telemarketing by Text Message

Governor Andrew Cuomo this week signed legislation (Chapter 239 of the Laws of 2021) expanding New York State's definition of telemarketing to include marketing by text message.

New Yorkers have protection against unwanted robocalls under state law, but texting was not previously defined as telemarketing, exempting it from those protections. This legislation closes that loophole.

The legislation was sponsored by Senator Leroy Comrie and Assemblymember Kenny Burgos.

Kroll Bond Rating Agency Assigns AA+ Rating to New York City's General Obligation Bond Credit Outlook

Kroll Bond Rating Agency (KBRA) has assigned an AA+ rating with a Stable Outlook to New York City's General Obligation bonds.

This is KBRA's second highest rating, the same that it has assigned to New York State, and the first time the agency has reviewed and rated the City's bond offerings.

KBRA also expressed support for City's long term financial and capital planning, and highlighted that pension funded ratios and unfunded liabilities have trended positively, while debt service is maintained below 15% of City tax revenues.

Earlier this year, Standard & Poor revised its outlook to stable on New York City's general obligation (GO) bonds and affirmed the AA rating assigned to its outstanding GO debt.

American Families Start Receiving Child Tax Credit Payments

On July 15, 2021 American families started to receive advance monthly payments of the Child Tax Credit of up to \$300 per month, per child through December.

The Child Tax Credit was included in President Joe Biden's signature legislation, the American Rescue Plan ("the Plan"). Under the terms of the Plan, families that make up to \$115,000 for a couple or \$112,500 for a single parent family will automatically receive the tax credit. American families will receive \$3,000 per child 6-17 years old and \$3,600 per child under 6 years old.

To learn more, about the Child Tax Credit, you can visit: www.childtaxcredit.gov.

Coming Up

New York State

Monday, July 19th

Review the ranked choice voting process in the 2021 primary election in New York City, Assembly Committee on Election Law, 250 Broadway, New York, 10:30 a.m.

Tuesday, July 20th

Nursing Home and Assisted Living Workforce, Senate Committees on Aging, Health and Labor, <https://www.nysenate.gov/events>, 10 a.m.

New York City

Tuesday, July 27th

Committee on Rules, Privileges and Election, Council Chambers- City Hall, New York, 11 a.m.
Georgia Pestana, appointment as Corporation Counsel.

Thursday, July 29th

Stated Council Meeting, Council Chambers, 1:30 p.m.

**“We believe in the ideas of family, mutuality,
the sharing of benefits and burdens
for the good of all, feeling one another’s pain,
sharing one another’s blessing
recognizing that at the heart of the matter
we are bound to each other.”**

-Mario M. Cuomo-

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To Our Clients: If you have any questions regarding any of the matters addressed in this newsletter, or regarding any legislative, government relations or political or consulting or related issues in general, please contact the Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC professional with whom you usually work.

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