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THIS WEEK IN NEW YORK

COVERING NEW YORK & CITY GOVERNMENT

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"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



Governor Hochul Signs Legislation Making Medical Care More Affordable and Accessible for New Yorkers

Chapter 576 Provides Follow-Up Screening or Diagnostic Services for Lung Cancer at No Cost to Patients

Governor Kathy Hochul yesterday signed legislation requiring health insurance policies to provide coverage for follow-up screening or diagnostic services for lung cancer and prevents insurance policies from imposing cost-sharing for those services. The law takes effect January 1, 2027. It was sponsored by Senator Joseph Addabbo and Assemblymember Crystal Peoples-Stokes.

"Lung cancer is one of the deadliest cancers in the nation, and the last thing a patient should have to worry about is out-of-pocket costs for critical follow-up screenings," Governor Hochul said. "Signing this legislation means that thousands of New Yorkers can focus on what is truly important: their health and well-being. With this law, New York is making clear that no one should face financial barriers to getting the care they need."

According to the Governor, lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer deaths statewide. Each year approximately 13,900 New Yorkers are diagnosed with lung cancer and about 7,400 die from this disease.

"... For too long, cost barriers have kept high-risk New Yorkers from getting fully screened, and the consequences have been deadly," American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) Senior Government Relations Director Michael Davoli said. "This law changes that reality."

This legislation builds on Governor Hochul's affordability agenda, which includes:

- A ban on insulin cost-sharing for state-regulated insurance plans in her FY25 Enacted Budget
- A new law to increase access to life-saving medication for New Yorkers suffering from asthma by eliminating cost-sharing for life-saving inhalers
- The implementation of new regulations that protect New Yorkers from sky-high drug costs by combatting business practices that lead to higher costs for consumers.



New Survey Shows NY's School Cell Phone Ban is Delivering Positive Results

Governor Kathy Hochul this week released survey results showing that her distraction-free schools law is already having a “transformative impact” for students and teachers at schools throughout New York State. The Governor’s Office distributed the survey in November and received over 350 responses from school administrators statewide.

“Our kids are finding greater success in the classroom when they’re focused on learning, not scrolling,” Governor Hochul said. “... These survey results are indicative of that effort, illustrating the effectiveness of our tailored approach to phone-free schools, and offer a glimpse of the success to come for our students.”

Results of the survey include:

Implementation: 92 Percent Reported Smooth Transition to Distraction-Free Learning

Feedback: Capital Region said: “Much smoother than expected... Community and parents are supportive as well.”

Classroom Impact: 83 Percent Reported More Positive Classrooms and Better Student Engagement

Feedback: New York City - A principal in New York City said: “Student to student discourse has increased considerably. Additionally, during recess time students are much more engaged and creatively playing games together. We also hear increased laughter!”

Teaching Impact: 75 Percent Reported Improvement in Their Ability To Teach Effectively

Feedback: Western New York: “High school teachers shared that students' responses to literature are deeper and more meaningful — they are seeing students actually reading and not just looking for Cliff Notes or quick answers. They are interacting with text at a deeper level.”



Chapters of the Laws of 2025

Chapter 574 – Sponsored by Senator Fahy/AM Romero -- Direct the Commissioner of the Office of General Services to erect a monument to be known as the "New York state Holocaust memorial."

Chapter 575 – Sponsored by Senator Harckham/AM Lasher – Clarifies the valuation and assessments of wind renewable energy projects in New York State.

Chapter 576 -- Sponsored by AM Peoples-Stokes/Senator Addabbo -- Requires that health insurance policies shall provide coverage for follow-up screening or diagnostic services for lung cancer.



Bills Delivered to the Governor



A468 Sponsored by AM Magnarelli/Senator Cooney -- Directs the commissioner of motor vehicles to conduct a study to examine and update the requirements of safety inspections conducted to ensure the operational safety of all motor vehicles.

A1820A Sponsored by AM Steck/Senator Sanders -- Requires the modification of restrictive covenants prior to the sale of real property when covenants and restrictions exist which discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, familial status, marital status, disability, national origin, source of income or ancestry.

A3307A Sponsored by AM Bores/Senator Hoylman-Sigal -- Incorporates the 2022 Uniform Law Commission recommended amendments for emerging technologies including virtual currencies, distributed ledger technologies (including blockchain), artificial intelligence, and other technological developments.

A3665A Sponsored by AM Simone/Senator Krueger -- Eliminates the rule that provides that whenever a city charter commission puts a proposal on the local ballot, all other local referendum proposals are barred from the ballot.

S946 Sponsored by Senator Jackson/AM Pheffer Amato -- Authorizes the removal of police officer candidates from an eligible list when such candidate does not meet psychological fitness requirements or lacks good moral character standards.

S1030 Sponsored by Gonzalez/Senator McDonald -- Requires public-facing websites operated by political committees to contain "paid for by" language and adds public-facing websites to the list of political communications that qualify as independent expenditures.

S1194B Sponsored by Senator Addabbo/AM Valdez -- Requires gas and electric corporations to provide forty-five days' notice to customers whenever there is a service rate or charge increase.

S3398 Sponsored by Senator Gounardes/AM Clark -- Clarifies that the State's Human Rights law guarantees reasonable accommodations and protects individuals who request such accommodations from retaliation.

S4200 Sponsored by Senator Gounardes/AM Raga -- Requires student financial aid award letters to contain information on net costs, defined as an estimate of the costs of attendance after financial aid which does not require repayment and options for loans which do require repayment.

S4423 Sponsored by Senator Hoylman-Sigal/AM Lunsford -- Provides for the types of damages that may be awarded to the persons for whose benefit an action for wrongful death is brought.

S4926 Sponsored by Senator Ramos/AM Bronson -- Allows workers compensation claimants to fill their prescriptions at network pharmacies and at pharmacies that are registered as resident, instate pharmacies with the New York State Department of Education.

S7001 Sponsored by Senator Mayer/AM Paulin -- Relates to provisions governing contracting between state agencies and not-for-profit organizations including new, renewal, and extension contracts and advance payments and interest for such contracts. repeals provisions relating to interest payments.

S7950A Sponsored by Senator Baily/AM Bronson -- Establishes a workers compensation fraud assessment commission.

S8420A Sponsored by Senator Gianaris/AM Rosenthal -- Requires advertisements to disclose the use of a synthetic performer.



New York State Legislative Session Calendar January — June 2026



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In The News-New York City



NYC Council Overrides Mayor's Vetoes of Bills to Prevent Rent Increases on CityFHEPS Recipients and Advance Pay Equity

The New York City Council yesterday voted to override mayoral vetoes of four pieces of legislation that will protect CityFHEPS recipients from rent increases, strengthen pay equity, and codify the Office of Contract Services. The bills were passed by the Council in October.

"These are common-sense bills to protect the lowest-income New Yorkers from rent increases, advance gender and racial pay equity, and improve the City's contracting process to remove obstacles for nonprofits," said Speaker Adrienne Adams. "They never should have been vetoed, and the Council is once again prioritizing New Yorkers by enacting them into law when the Mayor will not."

The Council voted to override the Mayor Adams vetoes of the following bills:

- [Introduction 1372](#), sponsored by Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala, would require that the rent contribution for CityFHEPS recipients not exceed 30 percent of the household's total monthly income. This addresses proposed new rules by the Department of Social Services that would increase CityFHEPS voucher holders' rent contributions from 30% to 40% of their gross income after their fifth year in the program, which would make them rent burdened.
- [Introduction 982-A](#), sponsored by Council Member Tiffany Cabán, would require private employers with more than 200 employees working in the City to submit a pay data report to a designated agency to improve pay transparency.
- [Introduction 984-A](#), sponsored by Majority Leader Amanda Farías, would require a designated agency to conduct an annual pay equity study on private employers with 200 or more employees to evaluate the extent to which any pay disparities are based on gender and race or ethnicity.
- [Introduction 1248-B](#), sponsored by Speaker Adrienne Adams, would establish an Office of Contract Services, the head of which would be the Director of Contract Services, who would serve as the City Chief Procurement Officer. This action would codify the existing Mayor's Office of Contract Services into the City Charter and provide it with additional powers



Bills Approved by the Council

Introduction 796-A, sponsored by Council Member Althea Stevens, would require DOB to send a monthly email to all Council Members and community boards notifying them of new sidewalk shed permits that were issued during the prior month.

Introduction 895-A, sponsored by Council Member Julie Menin, would require all schools to keep a minimum of one epinephrine auto-injector, or EpiPen, on-site, and a minimum of two EpiPens in every child care facility that is regulated by DOHMH.

Introduction 1002-A, sponsored by Council Member Kristy Marmorato, would require all schools to stock airway clearance devices within 180 days after they receive authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use. It would also require the DOE to report annually on the use and number of devices made available in each school building.

Introduction 1154-A, sponsored by Council Member Julie Menin, would require DOT to test high visibility pavement markings that could be more visible to road users in poor driving conditions.

Introduction 1217-A, sponsored by Council Member Susan Zhuang, would require the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) to inspect buildings within 14 days of receiving a 311 complaint relating to rats. DOHMH would publish online reports of inspections conducted and enforcement related to rats in the building.

Introduction 1225-A, sponsored by Council Member Julie Menin, would establish an Office of the Census. The office would be tasked with maximizing local participation in the federal census.

Introduction 1397-A, sponsored by Council Member James Gennaro, would require the Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and the Department of Buildings (DOB) to conduct a study to develop construction code amendments to address stormwater flood risks.

Introduction 1384-A, sponsored by Council Member Linda Lee, would amend the definitions of “site safety training (SST) card” and “site safety training supervisor card” in the New York City Building Code to require that an applicant complete 2 SST credits related to mental health and wellness, suicide risk and prevention, and alcohol and substance use.

Introduction 1392-A, sponsored by Speaker Adrienne Adams, would require quarterly payments to contractors under certain contracts with the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ), and establish a pilot program for quarterly payments for other contracts. Beginning July 1, 2027, covered DHS and MOCJ contracts would receive payments of at least 25 percent of the annual contract value at the beginning of each quarter.

Briefs

NY Gaming Location Board Approves All Three Applicants for Downstate Casino Licenses

Citing that New York's downstate gaming market is among the nation's strongest, the New York Gaming Facility Location Board approved all three remaining finalists for downstate casinos, two in Queens and one in the Bronx, by a 5-0 vote.

The Board recommended that the State Gaming Commission consider Bally's Corporation (Bally's Bronx), Queens Future, LLC d/b/a Hard Rock Metropolitan Park, and Genting New York LLC d/b/a Resorts World New York City for commercial casino licensure.

"The Gaming Facility Location Board has performed a true public service. These five individuals volunteered hundreds of hours to review and digest thousands of pages of complex application material and ultimately made the best selections for the State of New York," the State Gaming Commission said in a statement. "...We entered this process with a tabula rasa and are concluding with three impressive projects that will transform communities, establish career opportunities for residents, and drive much-needed revenue to the MTA, public schools and the City."

According to the Gaming Commission, it has already undertaken the background investigations of the applicants and is "expeditiously applying" its statutory license suitability criteria to "ensure that these casinos are operated with utmost integrity and fiscal responsibility."

"A New York gaming license is a privilege – and this Commission will ensure those entities fortunate enough to be selected for licensure meet New York's rigorous standards," the Commission concluded.

The final licenses are expected to be awarded by December 31st.

Governor Hochul Signs Legislation Establishing a New York State Memorial to Honor Holocaust Victims and Survivors

Governor Kathy Hochul this week signed legislation to establish a New York State memorial at the Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza in Albany to recognize victims and survivors of the Holocaust. Amid a rise in antisemitism in New York State and across the nation, the memorial will educate students and the public about the Holocaust and serve as a reminder of the dangers of antisemitism, racism, and all manifestations of intolerance, according to the Governor.

Chapter 575 directs the state Office of General Services (OGS) to oversee the design, programming and location of the New York Holocaust Memorial.

“When we say, ‘Never Again’, we need to act in order for those words to have meaning,” Senator Patricia Fahy, bill sponsor, said. “Creating a dedicated Holocaust Memorial where survivors, family members, and our broader community can gather to reflect and remember will memorialize the six million Jews and millions of others who died at the hands of the Nazism, fascism, and the Banality of Evil. Intolerance and prejudice only persist and spread when good people stand by and do nothing, and this Memorial cements New York’s and the Capital Region’s commitment to combatting hate wherever it may hide.”

New Yorkers Can Now Apply for Home Energy Assistance

New Yorkers can now begin applying for heating assistance through the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) to help defray the high cost of heating their homes during the winter. The program can provide up to \$996 to eligible households. The program, overseen by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), is 100 percent federally funded.

Eligible households can receive one Regular HEAP benefit per season and could also be eligible for an Emergency HEAP benefit if they are in danger of running out of heating fuel or having their utility services shut off. Applications for the additional emergency benefits will be accepted beginning January 2, 2026.

The benefit amounts vary based on income, household size, heating source and if the household contains a vulnerable member. A family of four can have a maximum gross monthly income of \$6,680, or an annual gross income of \$80,165, and still qualify for assistance.

Applications for assistance are accepted at [local departments of social services](#) and can be [submitted online, through the mail or in person](#). Additionally, older adults needing assistance with HEAP applications can contact their [local office for the aging](#) or contact the NY Connects helpline at 1-800-342-9871.

Comptroller DiNapoli: New Yorkers Deserve a Transparent Hiring Process When Artificial Intelligence Is Used To Vet Their Job Applications

Audit Found NYC’s Dept. of Consumer and Worker Protection Could Do More to Handle Complaints and Enforce Law on AI Use

New York City’s Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) is falling short in enforcing Local Law 144 (LL144) which regulates the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in employment decisions, according to an [audit](#) released by New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli.

The audit found that DCWP had trouble identifying non-compliance with the law, particularly when employers did not disclose AI use or post bias audits. As a result, job applicants are often unaware when AI tools are used to screen them. Additionally, it found DCWP’s complaint handling and enforcement to be inadequate.

According to Comptroller DiNapoli, the use of Automated Employment Decision Tools (AEDTs) in employment searches come with risks, including amplifying existing biases. In 2021 the New York City Council passed [LL144](#), which requires employers and employment agencies conduct a bias audit of an AEDT no more than one year prior to using it, post the results to their websites, and inform job candidates when and how the technology will be used.

Comptroller DiNapoli's audit found that DCWP did not do any additional outreach or public education after May 2023, despite agency officials identifying public awareness as a key part to enforcing of the law.

Governor Hochul Announces \$100 Million Child Care Capital Construction Funding Program to Expand Child Care Capacity Statewide

Governor Kathy Hochul this week announced the launch of a new \$100 million Child Care Capital Construction Funding Program designed to increase the availability of quality care and expand the capacity of child care across New York State. The initiative, which applies to new construction and expansion of existing facilities, is expected to add between 6,000 and 10,000 new seats at child care programs.

Individual grant awards will range from a minimum of \$500,000 to a maximum of \$5 million. To achieve regional parity, 60 percent of the funding will be targeted to the downstate region and 40 percent awarded in the rest of the state. Downstate is defined as New York City, Long Island, and the Mid-Hudson Region (Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester counties). Within each region, the goal is to award 40 percent of the grants for school-age child care programs and 60 percent to child care centers statewide.

Applications will be accepted from February 2, 2026, through March 13, 2026. Awards will be announced no earlier than May 4, 2026. For more information, visit the [Child Care Construction Funding Program](#) on the OCFS website.

Mayor Adams, DCWP Announce \$38 Million Settlement With Starbucks in Largest Worker Protection Settlement in City History

New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) Commissioner Vilda Vera Mayuga this week announced a “landmark” \$38.9 million settlement with Starbucks for widespread violation of the city's [Fair Workweek Law](#).

A multi-year investigation by DCWP found that Starbucks committed more than half a million violations of the law since 2021, illegally denying thousands of workers across more than 300 locations the right to stable and predictable schedules, as well as the right to pick up additional hours. DCWP found that Starbucks arbitrarily cut schedules by more than 15 percent.

The settlement requires Starbucks to pay more than \$35.5 million in restitution to over 15,000 workers harmed by Starbucks' unlawful practices, as well as any additional workers who come forward. The settlement also requires Starbucks to pay \$3.4 million in civil penalties and costs and requires the company to comply with the law going forward.

Under the agreement, most employees who worked for Starbucks in an hourly position in New York City will receive \$50 for each week worked from July 4, 2021 through July 7, 2024. Any employee who experienced a violation after July 7, 2024 may be eligible for compensation under the settlement by filing a complaint with DCWP.

Coming Up

New York State

Tuesday, December 9th

NYS Board of Elections Commissioners Meeting, 40 North Pearl Street, 5th Floor, Albany, 12 p.m.

Wednesday, December 10th

Public Hearing: Behavioral Health Workforce, Assembly Standing Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, 250 Broadway – Assembly Hearing Room – 19th Floor, New York, 11 a.m.

New York City

Monday, December 8th

Committee on Immigration, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.

Committee on Technology, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 3, 1 p.m.

Committee on Civil and Human Rights,
250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 3, 1 p.m.

Tuesday, December 9th

Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor, 10 a.m.

Committee on Aging, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 2, 1 p.m.

Wednesday, December 10th

Committee on Criminal Justice, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.

Committee on Oversight and Investigations, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.

Thursday, December 11th

Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 3, 11 a.m.

Committee on Land Use, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 3, 12 p.m.

Friday, December 12th

Committee on Health, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 3, 10 a.m.

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