



This Week in New York

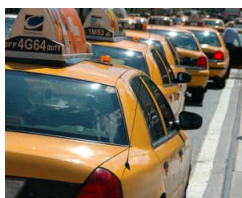
Covering New York State and City Government

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In the News – New York State

Speaker Silver Calls on Governor to OK Taxi Bill



The waning support for it is irrelevant.

Speaker Sheldon Silver



State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver today urged Governor Andrew Cuomo to sign legislation aimed at expanding taxi access to the outer boroughs.

Speaking on Fred Dicker’s morning radio show, the Assembly leader emphasized the revenue raised by the bill and its approval by the Legislature.



“My difficulty is that the bill means a billion dollars in revenues to the city of New York,” Speaker Silver explained. “I don’t want to see teachers or firefighters or police officers laid off as a result of losing those billion dollars in revenues...The waning support for it is irrelevant—it passed both houses of the Legislature; it’s waiting to be sent to the Governor; and all that has to happen is that ministerial act of sending it to the Governor and the Governor signing it.

Sponsored by Senator Martin Golden and Assemblyman Carl Heastie, the legislation would authorize the City of New York to:

- Issue 1,500 additional taxicab licenses and requires 569 of those additional licenses to be for accessible taxicabs.
- Issue up to 30,000 hail privilege vehicle permits to owners of for-hire vehicles.
- Issue up to 450 hail privilege base permits to for-hire vehicle base stations.

In addition the bill establishes a task force on areas of New York City underserved by medallion taxicabs.

The legislation was the subject of strong lobbying efforts on both sides at the close of the 2011 regular legislative session. It is supported (and was shepherded) by Mayor Michael Bloomberg. In addition, the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus is pushing the Governor for his approval.

Opposition to the legislation centers around the legislation's handicapped access provisions. Assemblyman Micah Kellner has opposed the legislation from the outset and has put forth an alternative. Recently, U.S. Senator Tom Harkin reached out to the Governor to express his opposition to the legislation. According to published reports, Senator Harkin asserts the bill does not go far enough to require handicapped-accessible cabs. He is the author of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

"We are having conversations with the Governor, with the Senate, with the City, and with relevant industry groups to see if there's something that can be done in terms of chapter amendments or some administrative regulations," Speaker Silver said. "I am not going to be responsible for the loss of \$1 billion in revenues as well as teacher, firefighter, and police officer layoffs."

The legislation is one of 30 bills passed by both houses of the Legislature which have yet to be delivered to the Governor for consideration.

DOH: New York Hospital Infection Rates Declining

The number of infections acquired by patients while in New York hospitals is declining, according to a report issued this week by the State Department of Health.

In 2007, New York began measuring the number of infections that patients acquire in hospitals across the state. The report does not capture all infections, but it publishes hospital-specific data for some of the most common infections including surgical site infections and infections of the central line (tube insertions used to deliver medications).

According to the DOH report, since 2007 the rate of central-line associated blood stream infections has fallen 37 percent, saving more than \$7 million because of shorter hospital stays and preventing the need for additional treatment.

Surgical site infections decreased 15 percent, saving more than \$8 million. Specifically, in 2010 the statewide rate for surgical site infections was 5.0 percent after colon surgery, 2.2 percent for chest incision infections after cardiac bypass surgery, and 1.1 percent for hip replacement/revision surgery. These rates represent a 15 percent overall decrease since 2007, and have helped to achieve estimated savings of between \$7.9 million and \$23.1 million due to decreased length of hospital stays and preventing the need for additional treatment.

"The progress made in New York to reduce hospital-acquired infections demonstrates strong collaboration and shows that an active commitment to patient safety can make a difference," State Health Commissioner Dr. Nirav R. Shah said. "We commend hospitals across the state for their efforts to reduce infection rates, and will continue to challenge health care providers to adopt best practices to further reduce infections."

In the News – New York City

Comptroller DiNapoli Highlights Flushing's Economic Viability

State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli joined state and local officials yesterday to release an “economic snapshot” of the growing Flushing community.



Comptroller DiNapoli &
M. of A. Meng

"Flushing is busy, booming, and bringing people to its streets at a rate that few can rival," Comptroller DiNapoli said. "This neighborhood boasts one of the highest business growth rates in the City and has added jobs every year since 2005."

According to the Comptroller's report, businesses, wages, and employment are all on the rise in Flushing. From 2008 to 2010, wages in Flushing rose by 16.9 percent, outperforming the rest of Queens which experienced a 1.3 percent decline. Employment has grown every year since 2005, outpacing job growth in the rest of Queens and New York City. In 2010, Flushing added jobs at a rate of 3.1 percent, while the rest of the City only saw 0.7 percent growth.

The largest employment sectors are health care and social assistance. In 2010, this sector accounted for one-third of the neighborhood's jobs and more than 40 percent of its wages. For example, New York Hospital Queens employs 5,520 workers on its Flushing campus, contributing almost \$900,000 to the area via payroll, supply purchases, and capital spending.

"Flushing has become a dynamic neighborhood with robust economic growth despite the recession," M. of A. Grace Meng asserted.

Flushing At a Glance

- The number of businesses in Flushing grew by 37.6 percent between 2000 and 2009, compared to 5.7 percent in the rest of the City.
- In 2010, Flushing added jobs at a rate of 3.1 percent, far outpacing the rest of Queens and the rest of the City.
- The largest employment sector is health care and social assistance. In 2010, this sector accounted for one-third of the neighborhood's jobs and more than 40 percent of its wages.
- Since the start of the recession, total wages rose by 16.9 percent (much faster than the rest of Queens) to reach \$1.7 billion in 2010.
- In 2009, more than half of the population was foreign-born, far greater than the citywide rate (35.6 percent).
- Public school enrollment grew by 11.3 percent over the past six years, resulting in significant overcrowding.
- Home values declined less during the recession and recovered more strongly in 2010 than in the rest of Queens.
- Rents rose by 41.1 percent between 2002 and 2008, faster than the rest of Queens and the rest of the City.

Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Rules for Disclosure of Independent Expenditures

The New York City Campaign Finance Board will hold a public hearing on proposed rules for the disclosure of independent expenditures on Thursday, October 27th at 11 a.m. in the OATH Conference Room E, on the 6th Floor, at 40 Rector Street in Lower Manhattan (between Washington and West Streets), New York, NY 10006.

Copies of the proposed rules are attached for your reference.

In Brief

Business Group Advocates Design-Build for Hurricane Recovery

Unshackle Upstate, a coalition of trade and business organizations, recently called upon Governor Andrew Cuomo to use his Executive power to speed up New York's hurricane recovery process by using design-build methods. In a letter to State Director of Operations Howard Glaser, Brian Sampson, Executive Director of Unshackle Upstate, cited the success of the reconstruction of the Minneapolis I-35 bridge as a "useful example of what is possible using the design-build process."

"Design-build is a method of project delivery in which a single entity works under one contract with the project owner to provide design and construction services, providing a unified flow of work from initial concept through completion," Mr. Sampson wrote. "The design-build process has been used successfully throughout the nation in constructing office buildings, schools, stadiums, transportation and water infrastructure projects with superior results."

Governor Launches Website Disclosing Schedule & Creating Town Hall Chats

Governor Andrew Cuomo launched a new website this week that discloses his private schedule since taking office in January and creates a town-hall chat for people to discuss policies and issues with his administration. The website, CitizenConnects, is a continuation of the Governor's efforts to provide greater transparency in his administration and allow the public to have greater access to his office. It can be viewed at governor.ny.gov/citizenconnects.

Since its launch yesterday, political writers have perused the Governor's schedule, highlighting his activities. Among the activities noted are a dinner with New Jersey Governor Chris Christie days prior to the announcement of a Port Authority toll increase, helicopter transportation for the Governor's daughter and her friend, and the changing roles of the Governor's staff (based upon meeting attendance).

Former Staten Island Assemblywoman Janele Hyer-Spencer Gets SED Post

Former Staten Island Assemblywoman Janele Hyer-Spencer's has been tapped by State Education Commissioner Dr. John B. King to serve as federal legislative liaison for the New York State Education Department. The position will be based in Albany and has an annual salary of \$84,000.

Ms. Hyer-Spencer spent two terms in the Assembly before she was defeated last November by current Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis (R-East Shore/Brooklyn). She holds degrees in law and public policy.

Cell service on subway platforms to begin Tuesday, MTA confirms

New Yorkers will be able to make calls and go online on their smart phones at six subway stations starting Tuesday, according to MTA officials. The pilot program for AT&T and T-Mobile customers will begin along the 14th St. corridor — at the A, C, E, F, L, M, No. 1, 2 and 3 platforms — and the C and E train station at 23rd Street.

All underground subway stations are expected to have service by 2016.

Coming Up

New York State

Tuesday, September 27th

Suffolk County Water Resource Protection

Assembly Standing Committee on Environmental Conservation

Babylon Town Hall Board Room, 200 East Sunrise Highway, Lindenhurst, 10 a.m.

How to Utilize Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) to Repair and Improve New York State's Transportation System

Senate Standing Committee on Transportation

Lupton Hall, Farmingdale State College, 3350 Broadhollow Road, Farmingdale, 10 a.m.

New York City

Monday, September 26th

Committee on Transportation, 250 Broadway - Committee Rm, 16th Fl., 10 a.m.

Int 0412-2010 In relation to requiring the department of transportation to hold hearings with affected community boards before a bike lane is constructed.

Int 0626-2011 In relation to interagency consultation prior to major transportation projects.

Int 0671-2011 In relation to requiring the reporting of certain statistics relating to major transportation projects.

Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations, 250 Broadway - Committee Rm, 14th Fl., 10 a.m.

Oversight - The Impact of Pop-Up Art Installations in Vacant Spaces.

Committee on Civil Rights Jointly with the Committee on Economic Development and the Committee on Community Development, Queens Borough Hall 120-55 Queens Boulevard, 10 a.m.

Oversight – Will Under-Banked Communities in New York City benefit from Banking Development Districts in a post “Great Recession” Economic Climate?

Tuesday, September 27th

Committee on Fire and Criminal Justice Services Jointly with the Committee on Public Safety and the Committee on Technology, 250 Broadway - Committee Rm, 16th Fl., 10 a.m.

Proposed Res. No. 870-A Resolution calling on the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign into law the Public Safety Spectrum and Wireless Innovation Act (S.911), which amends the Communications Act of 1934 to provide public safety providers an additional ten (10) megahertz of spectrum to support a national, interoperable wireless broadband network and authorizes the Federal Communications Commission to hold incentive auctions to provide funding to support such a network.

Oversight: First Responder Communications Ten Years After 9-11

Committees on Public Housing & General Welfare, 250 Broadway - Committee Rm, 14th Fl., 10 a.m.

Oversight: NYCHA’s Implementation of the Improving the Customer Experience Program for its Section 8 Rental Assistance Program.

Committees on Veterans & Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Alcoholism, Drug Abuse and Disability Services, 250 Broadway - Hearing Rm, 16th Fl., 10 a.m.

Oversight: The Increased Rate of Suicides Among Veterans.

Committees on Finance & Aging, 250 Broadway - Committee Rm, 16th Fl., 1 p.m.

Oversight: Examining the Department of Finance's implementation of the senior citizen rent increase exemption.

Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, Build it Green, 317 26th Avenue Astoria, 1 p.m.
Tour of Build it Green

Wednesday, September 28th

Committee on Housing and Buildings, 250 Broadway - Committee Rm, 16th Fl., 10 a.m.

Committee on Consumer Affairs, 250 Broadway - Committee Rm, 14th Fl., 10 a.m.

Oversight: Strengthening Protections for Consumers of Electronic Goods: Putting Consumers in “Charge”

Committee on Contracts, 250 Broadway - Hearing Rm, 16th Fl., 10 a.m.

Oversight: The Scope and Impact of Retroactive Contracts.

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