



"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 Announces Confirmations of Three Cabinet Members

Willow Baer – Commissioner of the Office For People With Developmental Disabilities

Amanda Lefton – Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation

Denise Miranda – Commissioner of the Division of Human Rights

The State Senate has confirmed three of Governor Kathy Hochul's appointments, rounding out the Governor's cabinet.

"New Yorkers deserve smart, experienced professionals at every level of government, and these leaders have distinguished themselves as public servants," Governor Hochul said. "Our Administration is laser focused on making New York safer and more affordable, and these three commissioners will play pivotal roles in our work to improve the lives of all New Yorkers."

Willow Baer was confirmed by the New York State Senate on May 21 to serve as Commissioner of the Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Commissioner Baer has been serving as Acting Commissioner since July 2024.

Previously, she served as OPWDD's Executive Deputy Commissioner and oversaw the agency's operational management, including planning, fiscal planning and oversight, and policy development. She was also responsible for oversight of agency staff in a broad range of capacities, including direct care support, clinical and medical staff in residential and non-residential settings, maintenance and operations.

Commissioner Baer has served twice as Assistant Counsel to Governor Hochul, overseeing legal priorities and legislation across the fields of Human Services and Mental Hygiene. Additionally, she previously served as General Counsel to OPWDD, General Counsel and Deputy Commissioner for the Office of Children & Family Services, and as Counsel to the NYS Justice Center.

Amanda Lefton was confirmed by the New York State Senate on May 28 to serve as Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Commissioner Lefton has been serving as Acting Commissioner since February 2025.

Commissioner Lefton's diverse career spans the public and private sectors, including previously serving as the Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) within the Department of the Interior. Under her leadership, BOEM developed and implemented the federal offshore wind program.

Prior to her role as BOEM Director, Lefton served as the First Assistant Secretary for Energy and Environment for New York, where she led the State's environmental and climate initiatives overseeing a portfolio of executive agencies including the DEC. She has also worked for The Nature Conservancy in New York as the Deputy Policy Director and climate mitigation lead, the Rochester Regional Joint Board of Workers United and the New York State Assembly and New York State Senate.

Denise Miranda was confirmed by the New York State Senate on May 29 to serve as Commissioner of the Division of Human Rights. Commissioner Miranda has been serving as Acting Commissioner since March 2024.

Prior to this, Commissioner Miranda served as the Executive Director of the New York State Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs for seven years. She oversaw the agency's operations, which included investigations into abuse and neglect, criminal prosecutions, and administrative disciplinary proceedings. Under her leadership, the Justice Center managed the care of over one million individuals, with a workforce of more than 425 employees and a \$41 million operating budget.



Bills Passed by Both Houses of the Legislature



A1195A – *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.

A2123A – *Sponsored by AM Berger/Senator Jackson* – Enacts the "Ignazio Giacalone act" to provide additional credits on New York City civil service placement tests to children and siblings of deceased New York city sanitation members.

A3404-A – *Sponsored by AM Lavine/Senator C. Ryan* – Requires hospitals to permit an interpreter to remain with a deaf, hard of hearing or nonverbal patient during admission to a hospital until appropriate hospital staff is assigned to interpret.

A3795 – *Sponsored by AM Weprin/Senator Krueger* – Indemnifies an intended parent for expenses disbursed when either the intended parent or a person acting as a surrogate receives IVF or IUI treatment that fails and does not result in the birth of a child.

A7749 – *Sponsored by AM Kim/Senator Serrano* – Establishing standards for trail closures on the Empire state trail.

S596 – *Sponsored by Senator Hinchey/AM McDonald* – Provides a rebuttable presumption relating to recertification as a minority and women-owned business enterprise if there is no change in ownership or material change in the nature or management of the MWBE.

S923 – *Sponsored by Senator Skoufis/AM Walker* – Moves all voters who remain enrolled in the now-defunct Independence Party or other defunct party with "Independent" or "Independence" in its name to the unaffiliated/blank rolls.

S952-B – *Sponsored by Senator Kavanagh/AM Lasher* – Updates New York's General Obligation Law to include the protections afforded for tenants with security deposits under the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act (HSTPA) of 2019 for rent stabilized tenants. Protections include requirements that landlords return security deposits within fourteen days from the tenant's vacatur, provide an itemized list of any damages beyond wear and tear for which they are deducting any part of the deposit return, and conduct an inspection within two weeks of tenants' vacatur to give tenants time to correct any damages.

S1030 – *Sponsored by Senator Gonzalez/AM McDonald* – Requires that public-facing websites paid for, hosted, and/or operated by political committees feature a disclaimer identifying the political committee responsible for the website.

S1194-B – *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.

S1218 – *Sponsored by Senator Bailey/AM Cruz* – Directs contracting state agencies to develop a growth plan in order to increase participation of MWBEs with respect to state contracts and subcontracts

S3781 – *Sponsored by Senator Brisport/AM Hevesi* – Requires the office of children and family services to provide luggage to youth in foster care.

S4153A – *Sponsored Senator Sanders/AM Cruz* – Prohibits food-service establishments and retail establishments throughout New York State from refusing to accept payment in cash from consumers. Under the legislation, "Food store" means an establishment which gives or offers for sale food or beverages to the public for consumption or use on or off the premises, or on or off a pushcart, stand or vehicle and "Retail establishment" means an establishment wherein consumer commodities are sold, displayed or offered for sale, or where services are provided to consumers at retail.

S4767 – *Sponsored Senator Bailey/AM Jackson* – Relates to training police officers on how to respond to situations involving individuals with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities. The bill expressly mandates that any police training for handling and responding to matters involving those with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities be accompanied by meaningful training in the appropriate use of force and de-escalation techniques when interacting with such individuals.

S7672A – *Sponsored by Senator Martinez/AM Jones* – Requires the reporting of cybersecurity incidents and demands for a ransom payment by municipal corporations and public authorities to the Commissioner of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES).



NY's Organized Labor Calls Upon Legislature to Ensure Fair Wages on Publicly Subsidized Construction Projects

Labor unions from across New York traveled to Albany this week to call upon the Senate and Assembly to pass legislation to amend the Prevailing Wage Law (224-A), guaranteeing fair wages and middle-class job opportunities for construction workers.

Sponsored by Legislative Labor Chairs Senator Jessica Ramos and Assemblyman Harry Bronson, S6378/A6708 would close loopholes and revise unclear regulations that have hampered the inclusion of qualifying construction projects under New York's Prevailing Wage Law.

According to the lawmakers, Section 224-a was passed in 2020 with the goal of expanding the number of projects subject to prevailing wage requirements across New York. Projects subject to these requirements provide New Yorkers with apprenticeship opportunities and middle-class jobs that provide real stability and security, and expanding the number of covered projects benefits both union and nonunion workers.

However, since its passage 5 years ago, only 6 new projects have been covered. Proponents assert the original law lacks the clarity and enforcement powers necessary to effectuate the intent of the law. In particular, the Public Subsidiary Board has not been able to fulfill its duties or worked meaningfully to prevent developers from evading the threshold requirements. Furthermore, many construction projects are funded through public subsidies that have been difficult to assess in the context of the current law.

Under the legislation, the current threshold for determining whether a construction project is subject to prevailing wage requirements would be revised. The new threshold would be: 1) when aggregated public funds are at least 20 percent of construction costs that total over \$5 million; 2) when actual money paid by public entities exceed \$3 million; and 3) when aggregated public funds exceed \$5 million.

According to the Labor chairs, the changes in this bill would bring Section -224-a closer to the goals of the original language, and it would further expand which projects are covered by prevailing wage laws.

The bills are currently in the respective Labor Committees. The scheduled close of the 2025 legislative session is June 12th.

In The News-New York City



Port Authority Breaks Ground on \$10 Billion New Midtown Bus Terminal

New York Governor Kathy Hochul, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey this week broke ground on the Dyer Avenue deck-overs, marking the first stage in construction of the new Midtown Bus Terminal.

The deck-overs represent the first step in the replacement of the existing 75-year-old bus terminal with a “world-class facility.” When complete, the project will include a new main terminal, a separate storage and staging building and new ramps leading directly into and out of the Lincoln Tunnel.

“...In recent decades, many have tried, yet many have failed to get this station rebuilt,” Governor Kathy Hochul explained at the groundbreaking ceremony. “In 2007, there was a plan with the developer to renovate it with a tower on the top. Well, that didn't go anywhere. In 2013, there was another attempt met by fierce community pushback. As recently as 2019, there was an effort started to bring back the 2013 plan, and none of these proposals managed to achieve what we're doing collectively today — breaking ground on a new Midtown bus terminal. This is a once-in-a-generation to get it right, and here we are because of the dedication of so many people who could believe that this day would come.”



Government officials and Labor Leaders Mark Construction Start

The project plan — including the permanent closure of a portion of 41st Street between Eighth and Ninth avenues, a central main entrance, more street-facing retail, a multi-story indoor atrium and new public open space — has been estimated at approximately \$10 billion and is expected to create approximately 6,000 union construction jobs.

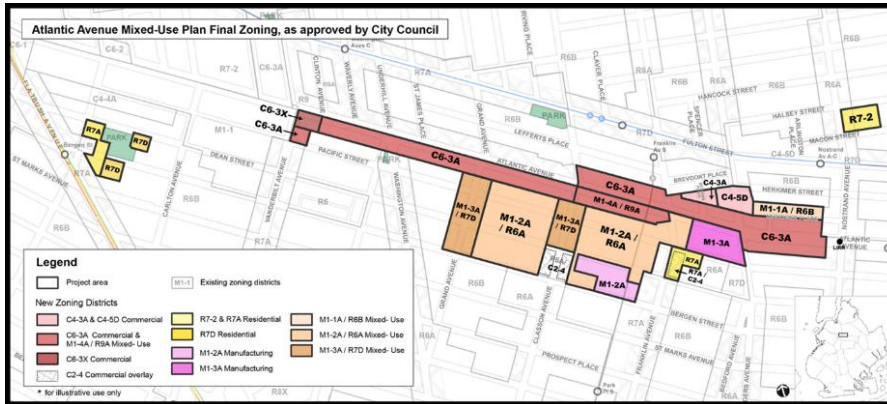
The Port Authority’s construction plan for the new bus terminal calls for it to be built in phases, with the deck-overs being built first followed by the storage and staging facility. The Dyer Avenue deck-overs project encompasses the construction of two decks over below-grade portions of Dyer Avenue and the Lincoln Tunnel Expressway between West 37th and West 38th streets and between West 38th and West 39th streets. The storage and staging facility can serve as a temporary terminal while the existing terminal is demolished and replaced.

The new terminal is designed to meet projected 2040-50 commuter growth. As of 2024, the terminal served approximately 205,000 average weekday daily passengers.



City Council Approves Adams Administration's Plan to Bring 4,600 New Homes, 2,800 Permanent Jobs to Central Brooklyn

The New York City Council has approved a rezoning plan that will bring approximately 4,600 homes — including 1,900 income-restricted, affordable homes — and 2,800 permanent jobs to the Atlantic Avenue corridor near Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant. According to Mayor Eric Adams, outdated zoning rules have long limited housing and job growth.



The Atlantic Avenue Mixed-Use Plan will revitalize a roughly 21-block stretch of Atlantic Avenue and neighboring streets between Vanderbilt Avenue and Nostrand Avenue. Since the 1960s, this area's zoning has largely banned new housing, allowing only one-to-two story industrial buildings and storage facilities, despite its proximity to job hubs and transit, and the city's deep housing shortage.

“With today’s passage of this administration’s Atlantic Avenue neighborhood rezoning plan, we are once again delivering on our promise to New York’s working-class families to improve neighborhoods and provide more affordable housing, more jobs, and a safer city,” said First Deputy Mayor Randy Mastro. “I was pleased to work so constructively with the local councilmembers here to get to ‘yes,’ and look forward to continuing to advance more neighborhood rezoning initiatives in the months ahead.”

In addition to the over 1,000 permanently affordable homes that will be built through Mandatory Inclusionary Housing, approximately 900 income-restricted affordable homes will be built on city, state, and nonprofit-owned sites across the neighborhood.

The plan will also deliver 800,000 square feet of space for ground floor retail, commercial uses and manufacturing businesses, and community facilities. On neighboring avenues and streets, updated zoning will allow for moderately-sized, mixed-use buildings with income-restricted affordable housing. Developed through programs run by NYC Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and state funding, these buildings will include units reserved for older, low-income households, families, and formerly homeless New Yorkers.

The city has also allocated an initial investment of \$24.2 million to [improve St. Andrew's Playground](#) with a new, synthetic turf, multi-use field featuring a running track, upgraded basketball and handball courts, renovated playgrounds, a remodeled public restroom, new seating, plantings, and other green infrastructure.

Briefs

MTA Board Approves \$68 Billion Capital Plan

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board on Wednesday approved the Authority's \$68 billion 2025-2029 capital plan, enabling transit officials to focus on bringing the subway, buses, and commuter rail to a "state of good repair."

Under the plan, transit officials will spend \$47.8 billion on upgrades to subway and bus systems, including 1,500 new railcars to replace 1980s models, elevators at 60 more subway stations and 2,500 new buses (including 500 electric models). In addition, the plan invests \$2.75 billion in the Interborough Express, a 14-mile light-rail that will link Brooklyn and Queens.

The FY2026 State budget included \$31.5 billion in new tax revenue to pay for the plan by increasing a payroll tax on businesses with more than \$10 million in payroll in the MTA's service area —raising the tax on those companies from 0.60% to 0.89%. An additional \$14 billion will come from the federal government, with the rest covered by dedicated funds from the state and city.

"It is the first capital program to truly and unapologetically say we are prioritizing the state of good repair," said MTA board chair and CEO Janno Lieber during the MTA's Wednesday board meeting, according to published reports. "We're not waving around a ton of shiny baubles. We love new projects. They, no secret, have helped to transform and grow the system. But we must maintain, we must preserve the system."

Attorney General James Wins Court Victory Against TikTok

New York State Supreme Court Judge Anar Rathod Patel this week denied TikTok's motion to dismiss State Attorney General Leticia James' lawsuit against the company for harming young people's mental health.

"In New York and across the country, TikTok challenges have put kids in harm's way, and countless others are struggling with high rates of anxiety and depression because of TikTok's addictive features," Attorney General James explained. "The youth mental health crisis is hurting families nationwide and we will continue our efforts to hold TikTok accountable and protect our young people."

In October 2024, Attorney General James co-led a bipartisan coalition of 14 attorneys general in filing lawsuits against TikTok for misleading the public about the safety of its platform and harming young people's mental health. The lawsuits, filed individually by each member of the coalition, allege that TikTok violated state laws by falsely claiming its platform is safe for young people. The lawsuits cited examples in which young users are struggling with poor mental health and body image issues due to the platform's addictive features and are getting injured, hospitalized, or dying because of dangerous TikTok "challenges" that are created and promoted on the platform.

This week's decision allows Attorney General James' case against the company to move forward.

US Judge Temporarily Blocks Trump Administration from Deterring NY's Congestion Pricing Program

A Manhattan federal judge issued a temporary restraining order this week, blocking the federal government from withholding funding from New York State in the battle over New York City's Central Business District Tolling Program.

Judge Lewis Liman ruled Tuesday that the order would be in place until 5 p.m. on June 9th. The order prohibits the Trump administration from withholding any funds, delaying approvals, or trying to enforce the U.S. Department of Transportation's assertion that it has barred the toll program.

Governor Kathy Hochul called the ruling "a massive victory for New York commuters, vindicating our right as a State to make decisions regarding what's best for our streets."

"Secretary Duffy can issue as many letters and social media posts as he wants, but a court has blocked the Trump Administration from retaliating against New York for reducing traffic and investing in transit," the Governor said.

NYC Rent Guidelines Board Lowers Proposed Increases

The New York City Rent Guidelines Board this week voted to reduce the proposed range of increases for rent-stabilized tenants with two-year leases, shifting the range from 4.75-7.75% (as approved on April 30th) to a range of 3.75-7.75%. One-year leases remain unchanged with a range of 1.75% to 4.75%.

The nine-member board voted 5 to 3, with one absence.

At the May 27 Board meeting Chair Doug Apple, in a statement, explained that an additional review of evidence received by the Board warranted the reconsideration of the preliminary guidelines range for two-year leases. In particular, he cited testimony on the impact of potential rent increases on tenants whose incomes are not keeping pace with the rising cost of living.

With the revised proposed guideline for two-year apartment leases, the Board will publish a new set of preliminary guidelines in the *City Record* and set a new hearing date on June 27th.

Following the April 30th vote, Mayor Eric Adams described the 7.75% upper end of the preliminary range as "far too unreasonable of a burden for tenants."

In 2024, the Board approved final increases of 2.75% for one-year leases and 5.25% for two-year leases.

Belmont Park to Host 2027 Breeders' Cup World Championships

Governor Kathy Hochul this week announced that Belmont Park in Elmont, N.Y., has been selected to host the 2027 Breeders' Cup World Championships. The Breeders' Cup at Belmont Park will be held October 29-30, 2027.

New York State and the New York Racing Association, Inc. are currently redeveloping Belmont Park, with a \$455 million capital construction project. Construction is expected to be completed in September of 2026. The plan was included in the FY24 Enacted Budget.

According to the Hochul Administration, thoroughbred racing will return to Belmont in 2026, with racing and non-racing activities at the new facility estimated to generate \$155 million in annual economic output and produce \$10 million in new state and local tax revenue per year.

Belmont Park will welcome the Breeders' Cup in 2027 for a fifth time after hosting in 1990, 1995, 2001 and 2005. The 2027 race dates are pending approval by the New York State Gaming Commission.

Coming Up

New York State

Tuesday, June 3rd

Public Hearing: Prevalence of Synthetic Opioids Adulterants in New York State,
Roosevelt Hearing Room C, Legislative Office Building, 2nd Floor, Albany

Wednesday, June 4th

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

New York State Assembly Session, Assembly Chamber, Albany, 11 a.m.

Thursday, June 5th

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

New York State Assembly Session, Assembly Chamber, Albany

Friday, June 6th

New York State Senate Session, Senate Chamber, Albany, 11 a.m.

New York State Assembly Session, Assembly Chamber, Albany

New York City

Tuesday, June 3rd

Committee on Women and Gender Equality, Committee Room – City Hall, 10 a.m.

Committee on Housing and Buildings, Council Chamber – City Hall, 10 a.m.

Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations, Council Chambers – City Hall, 1 p.m.

Wednesday, June 4th

Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, Council Chambers – City Hall, 11 a.m.

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