



"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



District Attorneys Endorse Governor Hochul's Plan to Streamline Discovery Laws

Governor Kathy Hochul today, joined by District Attorneys from across New York State, announced a series of improvements and changes to streamline New York's Discovery Laws. Governor Hochul proposed the reforms as part of her 2025 State of the State. The reforms are intended to end procedural delays and prevent automatic dismissals of cases.

The District Attorneys Association of the State of New York (DAASNY) voted yesterday to endorse the Governor's plan, asserting the changes would give their offices the tools and resources needed to protect the rights of victims and hold perpetrators accountable, while safeguarding the right to a fair and speedy trial.

According to the Governor, taking effect in 2020, New York's discovery reform introduced changes to enhance fairness in criminal cases, but led to unintended consequences. Currently, if a prosecutor's discovery compliance is later challenged successfully, the time between certification and challenge is retroactively counted against the prosecution, often resulting in dismissals unrelated to the merits of the case or the legality of the investigation.

This loophole inadvertently incentivizes delaying discovery challenges, in order to have cases easily thrown out on technicalities. To address this, Governor Hochul proposes changes to eliminate the incentive to delay discovery challenges and to ensure that a discovery error is addressed in a manner proportional to the discovery error itself rather than as a technical mechanism to have an entire case dismissed.

Proponents contend these changes will promote timely review that will improve case processing times, reduce delays that keep individuals incarcerated pre-trial, and prevent dismissals based on technicalities that can prohibit justice to victims.

“From Richmond County to Chautauqua County and everywhere in between, the unintended consequences of the 2020 Discovery Statute have led to the dismissal of thousands of felony and misdemeanor cases or the dramatic reduction of charges across our State,” Staten Island District Attorney and President of DAASNY Michael E. McMahon said. “This reality robs the victims of crime from ever receiving justice and is the direct cause of the rampant recidivism we all know and loathe today as dangerous criminals escape accountability and consequence for their criminal action. If New Yorkers want to know why there is a perpetual and revolving door of recidivism plaguing our State then look no further — our current discovery statutes are to blame. Now is the time to amend New York's broken Discovery laws and we thank Governor Hochul for recognizing this fact and for working with our fellow district attorneys and legislators to draft a proposal which restores common sense and accountability to our criminal justice system.”

Governor Hochul also proposed a series of improvements to streamline the State's discovery process. First, the Governor proposes clarifying that information requiring subpoenas in order to obtain is not necessary for certifying discovery compliance and that prosecutors may certify once they have disclosed all relevant materials in their actual possession. In addition, Governor Hochul proposes expanding the scope of automatic redaction to include sensitive details such as witnesses' physical addresses and personal data unrelated to the case, eliminating the need to engage in lengthy litigation to redact such material.

Governor Hochul also proposes reducing the requirement for providing 48-hour notice before a defendant's statements can be presented to a grand jury to 24 hours. This will help relieve the burden of counties that lack five-day grand juries and which, during extended weekends, do not have 48 hours before a case needs to be presented to a grand jury. These changes will ensure procedural fairness, streamline case processing and safeguard sensitive information.



Comptroller DiNapoli: Homeless Count Doubles in New York

Homelessness in New York state has grown sharply, more than doubling between January 2022 and January 2024, according to a [report](#) released by New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli. Homelessness grew by 53.1% from January 2023 to January 2024, more than four times the rest of the nation.

The large spike was driven by New York City and the influx of asylum seekers, but the rest of the state also had double- and triple-digit rate increases, led by Glens Falls, Saratoga and the surrounding counties.

The number of homeless children increased from 20,299 in 2022 to 50,773 in 2024. Almost one in three of New York's homeless are children, one of the highest shares in the nation.

“New York has long had a housing affordability crisis, and more families are running out of options and ending up on the street or in shelters,” Comptroller DiNapoli said. “Many of the tens of thousands of asylum seekers that came to New York had no place to stay and drove up spending and a large portion of the growth of the homeless population. But let's be clear, this isn't just a New York City problem, it is impacting communities all over the state.”

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) uses a single day, point in time count of the homeless population. The most recent count was done in January 2024, the same month the number of asylum seekers in city shelters peaked.

There were more than 158,000 homeless New Yorkers in 2024 – about one in five of the nation’s homeless. New York’s rate of homelessness, at about 8 per 1,000 people, was higher than all states except Hawaii and the District of Columbia. According to HUD, homelessness in New York increased because of eviction proceedings, lack of affordable housing, increased rents, and the influx of asylum seekers, among other factors.

New York City accounted for 93% of the increase in the state’s total homeless population. In January 2022, there were 45,343 people in New York City shelters run by the city Department of Homeless Services (DHS). By January 2024, there were 89,119 people in DHS shelters, 34,057 of whom were asylum seekers. New York City housed approximately 68,000 asylum seekers in total at that time.

Other findings in the report:

- Since 2022, homelessness in New York increased faster than the rest of the nation, more than doubling between 2022 and 2024 compared to only 20.7% growth in the rest of the nation. Only Illinois had a higher increase at 180%.
- People who were homeless were disproportionately Hispanic or Black, and 10% suffered from severe mental illness or chronic substance abuse.
- Homelessness ranged from 11% in Poughkeepsie/Dutchess County to 138% in Glens Falls, Saratoga Springs and surrounding counties. Outside of New York City, Long Island had the largest number of homeless in 2024 followed by Westchester County and counties around Buffalo and Niagara Falls.
- New York is second to California in the number of permanent supportive housing units (52,462 vs. 78,758) and permanent housing beds (21,672 vs. 26,059), but lags other large states in the number of year-round beds for rapid rehousing – 4,887. California has more than 28,000, Texas almost 11,000 and Florida 7,500.

Governor Kathy Hochul and New York City Mayor Eric Adams both announced affordable housing proposals in their recent 2025 policy addresses. The report also notes that New York state is currently implementing a five-year \$25 billion housing plan “to create or preserve 100,000 affordable homes,” including making multi-year investments for homeless housing and assistance and for affordable housing.

In The News-New York City



NYPD Commissioner Announces 3-Part Plan to Make New Yorkers Feel Safe

Focusing on quality-of-life issues in her first State of the NYPD Address, New York City Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch announced a three-part transit plan aimed at making subway riders feel safer and a new Quality-of-Life Division within the NYPD.

Commissioner Tisch detailed that the overall index crime was down in 2024, including a 3.6% decrease in murders, a 2.3% drop in robberies and a 5.7% decline in burglaries. NYPD statistics also showed a 17% reduction in crime in January 2025. However, despite these favorable metrics, New Yorkers do not feel safe.

“Two months ago, I re-examined our existing transit deployment and found entirely too many cops were posted at subway entrances, mezzanines, and turnstiles, and not enough were on the trains and the platforms where 78% of transit crime actually occurs,” the Commissioner explained. “The idea behind this initiative, frankly, is to not only make our riders safer but also to make them feel safer.”

Part 1: Deploy 200 Cops to Trains and Platforms. This plan has already been put in place.

Part 2: Overnight Surge of Two Officers on Each Train. The second part went into full effect this week and puts two officers on 150 trains — moving between cars overnight.

Part 3: Responsive policing. NYPA will enforce system rules like taking up multiple seats, drinking alcohol, or smoking. In addition, the new Quality-of-Life Division within the NYPD aims to address low-level quality-of-life crimes such as public urination, aggressive panhandling, unruly street vending, and abandonment of vehicles.

“This strategy is designed to address the surge of random acts of violence that we’re seeing in the subways,” Tisch said. “Because the truth is, the overwhelming majority of people who commit these violent acts have a long history of unlawful conduct in the transit system.”

Commissioner Tisch also called for expanding mental health training and matching services with enforcement when necessary to address the need for care during mental health crises.

“Our subway trains and platforms are not homeless shelters. They are not psychiatric hospitals. And as a city, we have a moral duty to provide services to people who need them,” Commissioner Tisch said.

During her address, Commissioner Tisch also challenged the State’s criminal justice reforms enacted in 2020, asserting that the system is “crying out for a course correction.”

“These changes had wide ranging consequences that skewed focus away from crime victims, Commissioner Tisch explained, in published reports. “Prosecutors were unable to build and present cases, and judges began to reflexively release offenders with no real recourse for their actions. The result is a revolving door that puts repeat offenders back on the streets again and again and again. The system is unsustainable. It defies common sense, and it is crying out for a course correction.”



Mayor Adams Announces Appointments and Promotions to City Hall Teams

New York City Mayor Eric Adams this week announced new appointments and elevations within multiple offices at City Hall, including in the offices of the first deputy mayor, the deputy mayor for administration and chief of staff, the deputy mayor for intergovernmental affairs, and City Hall chief counsel.

Within First Deputy Mayor Maria Torres-Springer’s office, Nate Bliss has been appointed chief of staff, Sarah Mallory has been named first deputy chief of staff, Reggie Thomas is moving to chief policy advisor, Marjorie Velázquez joins City Hall as director for tenant protection, Lizette Chaparro joins City Hall as a senior advisor for housing and land use, and Matthew Pietrus joins City Hall as senior advisor for transactions.

Within Deputy Mayor for Administration and Chief of Staff Camille Joseph Varlack’s office, Crystal Price has been appointed chief engagement officer and named deputy chief of staff to the mayor, Rory Whelan has joined City Hall as special advisor to the chief of staff, and Andrew Kunkes has been promoted to director of emergency relief and recovery.

Within Deputy Mayor for Intergovernmental Affairs Tiffany Raspberry’s office, Kristin Rezek has been promoted to chief of staff, Melanee Farrah joins City Hall as newly appointed director of Federal Legislative Affairs, Shanna Witherspoon has been promoted to director of State Legislative Affairs, Shirley Paul has been appointed director of City Legislative Affairs, and Sasha Mayo will be promoted to general counsel for intergovernmental affairs.

In Chief Counsel Allison Stoddart’s office, Bill Heinzen has been appointed deputy chief counsel, Alicia Berenyeyi was appointed as chief of staff, and Amanda Pappalardo was named executive senior counsel.

Biographies of the new Administration members may be found [here](#).

Briefs

Attorney General James Successfully Defends New York's Voting Rights Act

The New York Voting Rights Act (NYVRA), which sets guidelines for localities to follow in administering fair elections, was upheld as constitutional this week by a New York Supreme Court Second Appellate Department decision.

The lawsuit was brought by residents of the town of Newburgh who claimed its at-large election system diluted the vote of racial minorities in violation of the state law. The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) intervened in *Clarke v. Newburgh* to defend the constitutionality of the NYVRA's prohibition against racially discriminatory vote dilution.

"It cannot be said as a matter of law on this record that compliance with the (law) would force the defendants to violate the Equal Protection Clause," Presiding Justice Hector LaSalle wrote in the decision.

"Race-based districting is only one of the possible remedies under (the law)," the decision said. "The (law) also contemplates remedies that do not sort voters based on race, such as ranked-choice voting, cumulative voting, limited voting and the elimination of staggered terms."

The decision upholds the constitutionality of the NYVRA's vote-dilution prohibition and returns the case to the lower court to determine whether the Town of Newburgh's elections process violates the NYVRA.

"Our democracy thrives when all voters, regardless of their background, can make their voices heard at the ballot box," Attorney General James said. "...My office will always protect and defend the constitutionality of our laws and New Yorkers' most sacred right to vote."

Record Attendance at State Parks

Governor Kathy Hochul this week announced state parks, historic sites, campgrounds and trails operated by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (State Parks) saw a record 88.3 million visits in 2024.

Total visits statewide increased by over four million, which is a five percent increase compared to the previous record year in 2023. These numbers reflect Governor Hochul's investment in the park system's 100th anniversary last year, the 2024 total solar eclipse viewing events that broke state tourism records, and her free swimming initiatives.

Governor Hochul's Fiscal Year 2026 Executive Budget proposes \$200 million for State Parks to invest in and aid the ongoing transformation of New York's flagship parks and support critical infrastructure projects throughout the park system. The Governor's new Unplug and Play initiative also earmarks \$100 million for construction and renovation of community centers through the Build Recreational Infrastructure for Communities, Kids and Seniors (NY BRICKS), \$67.5 million for the Places for Learning, Activity and Youth Socialization (NY PLAYS) initiative helping New York communities construct new playgrounds and renovate existing playgrounds; and an additional \$50 million for the Statewide Investment in More Swimming (NY SWIMS) initiative supporting municipalities in the renovation and construction of swimming facilities.

NYC Chancellor: City Schools Could Lose Nearly \$350 Million Under the Executive Budget Proposal

Speaking this week at the State Legislative Fiscal Committees' Executive Budget Hearing, NYC Chancellor Melissa Aviles Ramos asserted that Governor Kathy Hochul's school funding plan disproportionately impacts the New York City school system compared to many other districts.

"I also want to be clear and direct about our concerns related to the Governor's proposed budget as it stands currently," she explained. "There is no question that the Foundation Aid formula needs a revamp, but the Governor's proposed changes to the formula would actually result in nearly 350 million fewer dollars to New York City Public Schools than we'd be entitled to under the current formula."

According to the Chancellor, New York City is contributing more than its fair share of the cost of running its school system. In 2002, the State and New York City contributed equally to City schools, but today, 57 percent of DOE funding comes from New York City, and only 36 percent from the State (six percent are federal funds and the remaining is related to other categorical funds). Last school year, the City also rolled out a new weight in New York City's funding formula for students in temporary housing—which the Foundation Aid formula does not currently consider.

Chancellor Ramos strongly requested that the State consider the recommendations DOE made last summer to the Rockefeller Institute of Government, including updating the regional cost metrics to better take into account the cost of living in New York City and updating and enhancing support for high-needs students.

Mayor Adams Announces \$82 Million Investment in Homeownership

New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) Commissioner Adolfo Carrión Jr. this week announced the expansion of the HomeFirst Down Payment Assistance Program, which provides qualified first-time homebuyers with up to \$100,000 toward the down payment or closing costs on a one-to-four family home, a condominium, or a co-op in the five boroughs.

The expansion adds \$41 million in new funding over the next five fiscal years — doubling the city's investment to \$82 million — broadens income eligibility and adds a new nonprofit partner to expedite programmatic support.

The initiative was included in Mayor Adam's State of the City Address.

Mayor Adams Celebrates New All-Time High Total Jobs Record, Again

New York City Mayor Eric Adams this week announced that New York City has, once again, set another record for an all-time high total number of jobs in the city's history, with 4,770,981 total jobs, according to new data released by the New York State Department of Labor.

This is the eighth time the Adams administration has broken the all-time high jobs record since Mayor Adams entered office. Included in the all-time high jobs number is an all-time high private-sector job record with 4,197,501 jobs.

Coming Up

New York State

Monday, February 3rd

Senate Housing, Construction and Community Development Committee Meeting,
512 LOB, 11 a.m.

Senate Higher Education Committee Meeting, 124 CAP, 11:30 a.m.

Senate Investigations and Government Operations Committee Meeting, 611 LOB, 11:30 a.m.

Senate Insurance Committee Meeting, 123 CAP, 11:30 a.m.

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

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

Tuesday, February 4th

Senate Social Services Committee Meeting, 410 LOB, 9:15 a.m.

Joint Legislative Public Hearing on 2025 Executive Budget Proposal – Topic:
Local Government Officials/General Government,
LOB Hearing Room B, Albany, 9:30 a.m.

Senate Labor Committee Meeting, 308 LOB, 10 a.m.

Senate Crime Victims, Crime and Correction Committee Meeting, 124 CAP, 10:30 a.m.

Senate Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs Committee Meeting,
124 CAP, 11 a.m.

Senate Agriculture Committee Meeting, 901 LOB, 11 a.m.

Senate Health Committee Meeting, 124 CAP, 12 p.m.

Senate Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting, 123 CAP, 12:30 p.m.

Senate Banks Committee Meeting, 710 LOB, 12:30 p.m.

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

New York State Assembly Session,
Assembly Chamber – New York State Capitol, Albany

Wednesday, February 5th

Joint Legislative Public Hearing on 2025 Executive Budget Proposal – Topic:
Mental Hygiene,
LOB Hearing Room B, Albany, 9:30

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

New York State Assembly Session,
Assembly Chamber – New York State Capitol, Albany

Thursday, February 6th

Joint Legislative Public Hearing on 2025 Executive Budget Proposal – Topic:
Transportation,
LOB Hearing Room B, Albany, 9:30 a.m.

New York City

Wednesday, February 3rd

Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and Dispositions,
250 Broadway – Committee Room, 16th Floor, 11 a.m.

Disclaimer: The materials in this *This Week in New York* report are provided for informational purposes only and are not intended to be a comprehensive review of legislative or governmental or political developments, to create a client-consultant/lobbyist relationship, or to provide consulting, lobbying or political advice. Readers are cautioned not to attempt to solve specific problems on the basis of information contained in this *This Week in New York*. If consulting, lobbying or government relations advice is required, please consult a professional expert in such matters.

The information contained herein, does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC, or any of its members or employees or its clients. Neither Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC, nor its members or employees make any warranty, expressed or implied, and assume no legal liability with

respect to the information in this report, and do not guarantee that the information is accurate, complete, useful or current. Accordingly, Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC is not responsible for any claimed damages resulting from any alleged error, inaccuracy, or omission. This communication may be considered an advertisement or solicitation. To request that copies of this publication be sent to a new address or fax number, to unsubscribe, or to comment on its contents, please contact Theresa Cosgrove at tcosgrove@pittabishop.com or at (518) 449-3320.

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. ***This Week in New York*** is a publication of Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC.

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

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

**1220 19th Street NW, St. 600
Washington, D.C. 20036**
Telephone (202) 964-4753
