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2022 Legislative Session Gains Traction

Against the backdrop of the impending unveiling of the FY 2023 Executive Budget, the 2022 Session got fully underway this week, albeit virtually for the foreseeable future, with both Houses of the Legislature hosting committee meetings to move bills to the floor of their respective chambers (More in the *Legislative Activity* section inside). Due to the ongoing spread of COVID-19 and its variants, the Office of General Services, which oversees the operations of the Legislative Office Building (LOB) and the Capitol, has [announced changes](#) to visitor access in the two respective buildings. The LOB will be closed to visitors until further notice, with meetings continuing virtually. Visitors to the neighboring Capitol building will be limited to those who are fully vaccinated or those who provide proof of a negative test within 48 hours of the visit. Masks are required to be worn at all times while in the building.

Executive Budget Due Next Week

The [New York State Constitution](#) requires the Governor to submit her Executive Budget Proposal by "the second Tuesday following the first day of the annual meeting of the Legislature," meaning the proposal is due by January 18th this year. The Executive Budget will serve as a statement of gubernatorial priorities signifying the start of the annual budget process in New York. Typically, the Senate and Assembly will then release their One-House budgets in early to mid-March setting their respective priorities and laying the groundwork for budget negotiation between the two houses of the legislature and the Governor. The deadline for a final state budget is April 1st (the state fiscal year runs from April 1 to March 31 of the following calendar year).

Eviction Moratorium Set to Expire

With no action in the legislature related to the eviction moratorium, and Governor Hochul not yet issuing any new related Executive Orders, the eviction moratorium in NYS is set to expire on Saturday January 15, 2022. This follows a court order prompting State officials to reopen the Emergency Rental Assistance Program portal (more in the *State Agencies* section inside).

Supreme Court Blocks Federal Vaccine or Test Mandate on Businesses

The United States Supreme Court issued a 6-3 ruling stopping the Biden administration from implementing a vaccine or test mandate on businesses. The US Supreme Court [also issued](#) a separate ruling allowing a vaccine mandate on healthcare workers.

Devastating Bronx Apartment Fire Prompts AG Warning

Sunday's tragic fire at an apartment complex in the Bronx, which apparently started after a space heater that had been running for several days burst into flame, claimed the lives of 17 people. In the wake of the tragedy, NY Attorney General Tish James [has warned](#) New Yorkers to be vigilant of scams looking to fraudulently collect donations in the name of helping the victims.



From the Governor

Statement on Justice Shirley Toutman's Appointment

The New York State Senate confirmed Justice Shirley Toutman to New York's highest court, the NYS Court of Appeals. Governor Hochul's full [statement here](#).

Plan to Address Truck and Bus Driver Shortage

Governor Kathy Hochul [announced](#) a plan to help address a shortage of truck and bus drivers by expanding the availability of road tests for Commercial Driver License (CDL) applicants. The initiative would allow qualified third parties to offer the road tests.

Executive Orders

There were no new COVID-19 related Executive Orders issued this week.

Legislative News

Legislative Activity

The Legislature will hold session on the 18th, 19th, and 20th next week. There were 53 bills passed this week. Of particular note was:

~[A.603 \(Rosenthal\) / S.2627 \(Sanders\)](#) Which repeals sections of insurance law relating to anti-arson applications for insurance coverage to insure any building against the peril of fire or explosion. This bill passed the Assembly and heads to the Senate for consideration in committee.

The *2022 Legislative Calendar* can be accessed [here](#).

Upcoming Public Hearings

~January 14th, 2022. Senate Standing Committees on Finance; Economic Development and Small Business; Investigations and Government Operations. Topic: to review the effectiveness of business subsidies and tax incentives in meeting New York State's economic development goals.

[Check here](#) for the full list.

State Agencies

From the New York State Office of the Comptroller

School District Tax Levy Cap at 2%

For the [first time](#) since 2019, property tax levy growth for school districts will be capped at 2%, up from 1.23% last year, according to [data](#) released by State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli.

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%. School districts may override the cap with 60% voter approval of their budget.

From the New York State Department of Financial Services

Acting DFS Superintendent Announced \$10 Million Settlement

Acting DFS Superintendent Adrienne Harris [announced](#) a \$10 million settlement with Columbian Mutual Life Insurance Company in a claim arising from Columbian Mutual's alleged failure in complying with NYS Death Benefit Law by failing to make efforts to identify beneficiaries for thousands of policies.

From the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)

While the total requests for funding exceed available federal funding for the ERAP program, NYS did reopen the portal for landlords to apply for funding after a [court ordered](#) the state to begin accepting applications again. Households in any part of the state with income over [80 percent](#) and up to [120 percent](#) of area median income can still apply for state-funded emergency rental assistance.

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