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Happy New Year:

2022 Legislative Session Gets Under Way

We rolled into the New Year over the weekend and the legislature officially opened the 2022 Legislative Session on Wednesday, albeit mostly virtual, highlighted by Governor Hochul's first State of the State address, delivered from the Assembly Chamber on January 5. In her [State of the State Book](#), Governor Hochul detailed a plan containing 228 initiatives, outlining her agenda and providing insight into what may be included in the Executive Budget, which expected to be unveiled on January 18. The focus was on COVID pandemic recovery and included a number of policy provisions and funding sought by advocates, health care providers and businesses throughout the state.

State of the State Highlights:

Healthcare: The Governor indicated she wants to make developing the healthcare workforce a priority, unveiling a \$10 Billion Healthcare Plan including a range of policy initiatives, increasing compensation for healthcare workers, and a goal of growing the healthcare workforce by 20% over the next five years. She also detailed plans to propose legislation to allow New York State to join the [Interstate Medical Licensure Compact and the Nurse Licensure Compact](#) to allow doctors and nurses to relocate from other states and practice in New York more easily. The State of the State Book also contained a plan to establish reimbursement [parity for telehealth services](#) across commercial insurance plans.

Economic Development: Acknowledging that many businesses continuing to feel the impact of COVID on their business operations and many families also continue to struggle with pandemic related financial pressure, the Governor proposed a myriad of measures aimed at improving the state's economy. The proposals include: \$100 million in small business relief by increasing "subtraction modifications" that reduce a small business's gross taxable income; accelerating \$1.2 billion in previously scheduled middle-class tax cuts to implement the cuts two years earlier; \$1 billion in property tax rebates; increased tax credits for farmers; and increased resources to eliminate the backlog of MWBE applications and expedite the appeals process along with increasing access to reduced-rate financing for MWBEs.

"To-Go" Beverages: Also recognizing the financial struggles of the bar and restaurant industry, Governor Hochul proposed permanently allowing venues to offer alcoholic beverages "to-go." Allowing to go beverages had been implemented by a COVID related Executive Order and were viewed as a lifeline to many local bars and restaurants.

New York City Mayor:

At the start of the New Year Eric Adams took the oath of office becoming the 110th Mayor of New York City. Mayor Adams wasted no time getting to work, making appointments in City Hall/Mayor's Office, the Deputy Mayor's Office, and other Major Departments and Commissions including the Budget Office, the Chancellor of NYC Public Schools, Corrections, Finance, Health and other essential offices.



Legislative News

Legislative Activity

The Senate and Assembly both held their first day of session. There were no bills passed as the day was largely procedural, however, Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins did welcome a new member to her conference: [Cordell Cleare](#) who was elected in a special election to replace Brian Benjamin after he vacated the seat to become Lt. Governor.

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

Upcoming Public Hearings

~January 7th, 2022. Senate Standing Committees on Judiciary and Housing, Construction and Community Development. Topic: To discuss the Good Cause Eviction Proposal (S3082/Salazar).

~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.

From the Governor

Special Election:

Governor Hochul has issued a [proclamation](#) calling a special election on [February 15, 2022](#) to fill vacancies in the 60th and 72nd Assembly Districts. The vacancies were created when Charles Barron and Carmen De La Rosa left to serve on the NYC Council.

More SOS Highlights SUNY:

Governor Hochul unveiled plans to award prior learning credit; stop transcript withholding; provide childcare at SUNY/CUNY campuses; as well as promote capital projects across the state.

Transportation:

Governor Hochul outlined plans to introduce a new 5-year capital plan for the NYS Department of Transportation that will support a bevy of projects across the state.

Executive Orders

Gov. Hochul extended [EO 4](#) with [EO 4.4](#) through January 30. ([more here](#)).

State Agencies

From the Office of the New York State Attorney General

Opioid Trial - A [jury voted](#) that Teva Pharmaceuticals USA, Inc. and its affiliates were liable for the public nuisance charges made by the NYS AG in its opioid trial in Suffolk County State Supreme Court. A subsequent hearing will be held to determine how much Teva will be required to pay, however, the amount will be in addition to a \$1.5 billion settlement for New York previously negotiated by AG Tish James.

From the Office of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Climate Action Plan - The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation has [released a draft scoping](#) plan which sets off the 120 day public comment period beginning January 1, 2022. Comments can be submitted via the online [public comment forum](#) or be sent via email at scopingplan@nyserda.ny.gov.

From the New York State Gaming Commission

Sports Betting - The NYS Gaming Commission [announced](#) four licensed Mobile Sport Wagering Operators: Caesars Sportsbook, DraftKings, FanDuel, and Rush Street Interactive have satisfied all statutory and regulatory requirements necessary to accept and process mobile sports wagering activity and have been approved to commence operations with launch effective no earlier than Saturday, January 8, 2022 at 9 a.m. Eastern Standard Time. After that effective date, each licensee (Caesars Sportsbook, DraftKings, FanDuel, and Rush Street Interactive) will determine when to accept wagers, based upon its business capabilities and readiness. The remaining five conditionally licensed Mobile Sports Wagering Operators continue to work towards satisfying statutory and regulatory requirements necessary to launch and will be approved on a rolling basis when requirements are met.

From the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

Eviction Moratorium - With the eviction moratorium set to expire on January 15, 2022, the issue remains on the forefront of public policy discussions as legislators and the Governor discuss the next steps. On the judicial side, a State Supreme Court Justice [issued a preliminary injunction](#) ordering the state to reopen its application portal for Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). The [OTDA website](#) will have updates as they emerge.

Cannabis:

The Park Strategies LLC Cannabis Practice Group has put together the Social Equity Newsletter Found [here](#). Please contact a member of our team related to any questions you may have on the Cannabis Industry.

PARK STRATEGIES, LLC

101 Park Avenue · Suite 2506 · New York NY 10178 · (212) 883-5608
111 Washington Avenue · Suite 600 · Albany NY 12210 · (518) 426-3800
327 W. Fayette Street · Suite 415 · Syracuse NY 13202 · (315) 396-7535

www.parkstrategies.com

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