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NYS Legislature Passes New District Maps as Session Moves Forward

As the State [prepared](#) for a mixed bag of ice, freezing rain and snow this week, the legislature approved a new election redistricting plan, joint legislative budget hearings entered week two, and the Governor's mask mandate received more support from the courts.

Re-Mapping Election Districts

The New York State Legislature developed and approved their own redistricting plan after a final rejection of a proposal advanced by the Independent Redistricting Commission. The adopted plan, signed into law by Governor Hochul, redraws [congressional](#) as well as state [Senate](#) and [Assembly](#) election districts for the next 10 years. Early [reports project](#) Democrats could end up with a 22-4 seat advantage in New York congressional districts, currently they hold 19 seats. Overall, the state [loses one](#) Congressional Seat due to census decline and with the re-drawn lines, the five boroughs of New York City will pick up two additional congressional seats.

State Senate and Assembly seats also underwent some changes, however the [adopted Assembly plan](#) closely mirrors a plan they approved nearly a decade ago. The state Senate seats consolidated representation in Monroe County where there will be 3 State Senators instead of the 6 that currently represent portions of the county.

Executive Budget

As the legislature continues to review the Governor's budget proposal and awaits the Governor's 30 - day amendments (due this month), the Governor continued to roll out funding announcements this week for various sectors across the state including:

- \$100 Million for [Behavioral Health Centers](#)
- \$76.4 Million in [Freight Rail Infrastructure](#) Investments
- \$57 Million to Upgrade [Affordable Housing](#) Development in Buffalo
- \$1 Million for a [NY/Israel Smart Energy Challenge](#) (*More in the From the Governor Section*)

NYS Court Grants Full Stay on State's Mask Requirement

New York's mask mandate [will remain in effect](#) at least until the state's appeal of a state Supreme Court decision is decided. A four-judge panel in the highest court in NYS, The Court of Appeals, followed an appellate judge's decision to temporarily restore the order the day after the lower court's ruling deemed the mandate unconstitutional. In the meantime, the mask mandate was extended by the Commissioner of Health through February 10th while the process plays out in court.



From the Governor

Second Round of Smart Energy Competition Opens

Governor Hochul [announced](#) the launch of the 2022 New York Power Authority (NYPA) & Israel Smart Energy Challenge, which seeks start-up technologies from companies headquartered in Israel to help meet the needs of New York's utility operations, and advance the State's clean energy transformation. The winner of the \$1 million competitive award will collaborate with NYPA.

Executive Orders

Governor Hochul issued EO 4.5 related to [the declaration of a statewide disaster emergency due to healthcare staffing shortages in the State of New York](#) was again extended through March 1, 2022..

Legislative News

Legislative Activity

The Legislature will hold session on the 7th, 8th, 9th next week (the *2022 Legislative Calendar* can be accessed [here](#)). There were 85 bills passed this week. Of particular note was:

~ [A8787 \(Woerner\) / S7717 \(Kavanagh\)](#) Requires every general hospital and nursing home to comply with Medicare and Medicaid conditions of participation for antimicrobial stewardship programs in health care facilities, including training requirements regarding antimicrobial resistance and infection prevention and control.

Upcoming Budget Hearings

The Legislature will be conducting the following budget hearings:

- ~February 7th, Higher Education
- ~February 8th, Health
- ~February 9th, Local Government
- ~February 14th, Mental Hygiene
- ~February 15th, Transportation
- ~February 16th, Economic Development / Taxes

Details [here](#).

State Agencies

From the New York Office of the NYS Attorney General

AG files Lawsuit Against Precious Metals Company

New York Attorney General Letitia James [filed a lawsuit](#) against a precious metals company – Safeguard Metals LLC – and its owner and manager, Jeffrey Santulan, for defrauding investors, including many seniors, across New York and the nation. The lawsuit, filed by the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) and a coalition of 27 states, alleges that Safeguard Metals deceived nearly 450 investors nationwide by fraudulently soliciting nearly \$68 million for precious metals and misrepresenting its exorbitant fees charged to investors.

From the New York Office of the NYS Comptroller

Comptroller Reports on NYC Workforce Pressures, Financial Plan Fiscal Cliffs & Agency Challenges

DiNapoli released [a new report](#) on the impact of the pandemic on New York City's workforce, unveiled [an online tool](#) identifying key programs that face funding risks, and published a [series of reports](#) examining the most significant issues facing the city's largest agencies. The City report shows the COVID pandemic brought an end to years of hiring increases in the city's workforce, which rose 12.3% over eight years through Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 to reach 300,446 employees. The city's pre-pandemic hiring was largely driven by new teachers and support staff for expanded Pre-K and police and correction officers.

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