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Legislature Releases One House Budget Bills

The legislature spent Monday and Tuesday in session debating and passing their respective One-House Budget proposals, supporting many of the Governor's proposals but adding a wide range of their own priorities as the state's annual budget process wends its way toward the April 1 enactment deadline. Also, this week the state launched the online portal to apply for adult-use cannabis cultivator licenses, the Attorney General secured a settlement with online travel agencies, and the State Comptroller released a long-anticipated audit on to the NYSDOH's reporting of COVID-19 related deaths in nursing homes. And we change seasons this Sunday as vernal equinox marks the first day of spring (yes already).

NYS Assembly One-House Budget: The Assembly [released](#) their FY 2023 Budget Proposal of \$226.4 billion including budget priorities such as:

- \$3 Billion for Childcare
- \$150 Million Included to Support and Expand Universal Pre-K
- Aid for Rent Relief and Paths to Homeownership
- Mental Health Services for New Yorker
- Eliminating the Medicaid Global Cap
- Increasing Wages for Home Care Workers

NYS Senate One-House Budget: The NYS Senate [Announced](#) a \$229 billion FY 2023 spending plan that included priorities such as:

- A commitment to Climate Action
- Property Tax Relief for Homeowners
- Rent Relief for Tenants
- A Suspension of the State's Tax on Gasoline
- Funding for caregivers, Infrastructure at the Local Level, and Investments in Mental Health Services alongside Investments in Community Violence Prevention
- Eliminating the Medicaid Global Cap
- Increasing Wages for Home Care Workers

Cannabis: The portal to apply for Adult-Use Conditional Cultivator Licenses opened this week, accepting applications from qualifying hemp farmers to allow them to cultivate this season. More information on the portal, including requirements and applicable fees can be [found here](#).

NYS Attorney General: New York Attorney General Letitia James [secured](#) \$2.6 million from an online travel agency, Fareportal Inc., for misleading consumers with deceptive marketing tactics.



Acting Director of the Empire State Development - Connect All Office, Scott Rasmussen outlined the Connect All program to attendees of the annual New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) Legislative Conference on Tuesday. The Park Strategies team attended the four-day Conference along with more than 700 municipal officials. The event was headlined by Governor Kathy Hochul and state Comptroller Tom DiNapoli. Park Strategies represented several municipal and business clients during break-out meetings and workshops.

Legislative News

Legislative Activity

The Legislature will be in session the 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th next week (the 2022 *Legislative Calendar* can be accessed [here](#)). There were 30 bills passed this week. Of particular note was:

~ [S3579A \(Breslin\)](#) Relates to licensing of independent insurance adjusters by waiving requirements regarding a written examination if the applicant holds a claim certification from a national or state-based claims association. This bill passed the Senate, and while there is no “Same-As” sponsor in the Assembly, it will head to the Assembly Insurance Committee for future consideration.

Budget / Public Hearings

There are no Public Hearings currently announced in the legislature. The public hearing calendar can be accessed [here](#).

From the Governor

\$500 Million for Small Business

Governor Hochul [announced](#) \$500 million in grant funding through the Empire State Development COVID-19 Pandemic Small Business Recovery Grant Program that will go to nearly 29,000 small businesses throughout New York State. The program was created to provide flexible grant assistance to small businesses, micro-businesses and for-profit independent arts and cultural organizations in the State of New York who have experienced economic hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Executive Orders:

Executive Order 11.4 was issued, extending EO 11, 11.1, 11.2 and 11.3, through April 15, 2022. Through [Executive Order 11](#), Governor Hochul has empowered the NYS Department of Health to limit nonessential, non-urgent procedures in hospitals or systems with a capacity below 10% staff bed capacity. EO [11.1](#) and [11.2](#) also empowered the legislature to continue meeting remotely.

State Agencies

From the New York Office of the NYS Comptroller

Audit Presents Timeline of State Health Department Underreporting of Nursing Home Deaths

According to [an audit](#) released by New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli, the state Department of Health (DOH) was unprepared to respond to infectious disease outbreaks at nursing homes, even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit New York. DiNapoli said that a persistent lack of funding for public health over the last decade forced DOH to operate without critical information systems and staff that could have identified and helped limit the spread of COVID-19 at nursing homes.

State auditors also found that DOH did not provide the public with accurate COVID-19 death counts and became entangled in the undercounting of those deaths as the Executive took control of information provided to the public. According to the Comptroller, DOH would not provide auditors with a breakdown by name of the nursing home residents who died from COVID-19, and the actual number of nursing home residents who died is still uncertain. The audit revealed that, on many key indicators, New York significantly trailed other states in surveying nursing homes and developing strategies to stop infections from spreading in facilities.

From the New York Office of the NYS Department of Financial Services

Superintendent announces \$4.2 Million in fines for insurer's untimely reporting to DMV

Superintendent of Financial Services Adrienne A. Harris [announced](#) that Zurich American Insurance Company (Zurich) and Progressive Direct Insurance Company (Progressive) have entered into separate Consent Orders with the Department of Financial Services (DFS) resolving DFS's investigations into the companies' failure to timely report certain insured vehicle information to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Under those Consent Orders, Zurich has agreed to pay a fine of \$2.2 million, and Progressive has agreed to pay a fine of \$2 million, a total of \$4.2 million to New York State. This is the first such action that DFS has taken in an industry-wide investigation of untimely reporting to the DMV.

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