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Six More Scheduled Session Days:

Distractions Continue as Session Enters Final 2 Weeks

On the cusp of the final six days of the legislative session schedule, the legislature faces mounting distractions as it grapples with a range of pending policy issues including the extension of NYC Mayoral control of schools, a potential New York State response to a purported U.S. Supreme Court decision to strike down Roe V. Wade, the reignition of the gun control debate, along with local priorities that must be addressed prior to adjournment. Also, this week the state continued to monitor a substantial increase in prevalence of COVID-19, and the electoral process was further upended with the release of draft district maps for U.S. Congressional and State Senate races.

Special Master Unveils Draft Maps: The Special Master appointed by the NY Courts to draw independent maps following the legal challenge to the maps adopted by the legislature earlier in the year, released a draft proposal of the Congressional and State Senate maps. The draft [Congressional maps](#) and the [State Senate maps](#) are set to be finalized by the end of the day Friday, May 20, 2022. There is a possibility these maps will change in the final version released Friday. However, if the draft maps hold, there are several current incumbent members of Congress and of the State Senate that will be drawn into the same districts. These members may choose to face off against each other in the primaries. In Congress they can run for a seat in a district they do not currently live in as long as they move into the district prior to taking the oath of office. It is more complicated for the State Senate where an individual may only run for a seat in a district where they currently reside. They have the option of moving out of the district where they had been running thus deeming them ineligible for that seat, allowing the utilization of a substitution process to run for a new seat in a different district. Under any of these scenarios, the recent changes have added confusion to the process and disarray to the State primary picture.

President Visits Buffalo: President Biden visited Buffalo on Tuesday to mourn the loss of 10 Americans killed in an act of domestic terrorism. President Biden [called on Americans](#) to “reject the lie” of white supremacy speaking to the victims’ families, local officials and first responders. NYS Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie also traveled to Buffalo to speak out against the violence and [held rallies at the Million Dollar Staircase](#) in Albany to stand in solidarity following the mass shooting.

Covid on the Rise: [New York State COVID hospitalizations](#) are now approaching 3,000, more than doubling last month’s figure as an omicron subvariant believed to be the most transmissible strain yet spreads across the state.

PSLLC Notes:

Congratulations to Park Strategies Legislative Director Trevor Bender who graduated from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs last weekend, earning his Master's of Public Administration from Syracuse University.



From the Governor

Governor Responds to Buffalo Shooting

Governor Hochul signed an [Executive Order](#) to establish a new Domestic Terrorism Unit within the Office of Counter Terrorism. The order also establishes a State Police Unit to track and respond to extremist violent threats on social media. The Governor signed an additional [Executive Order](#) requiring the State Police to file Extreme Risk Protection Orders with probable cause under the NYS Red Flag Law. Finally, the Governor also [announced her support](#) of yet to be proposed legislation that would close the "other gun" loophole by revising and widening the definition of a firearm.

Executive Orders:

In addition to the EOs outlined above, there were no new statewide Executive Orders were issued this week, and likewise there were no extensions for existing statewide Executive Orders.

Legislative News

Legislative Activity

The Legislature is scheduled to be in session three days next week on the 23rd, 24th, 25th (the *2022 Legislative Calendar* can be accessed [here](#)). There were 261 bills passed this week. Of particular note was:

~ [A8617 \(Meeks\) / S4329 \(Breslin\)](#) authorizes life insurers to establish wellness programs in conjunction with the issuance of life insurance policies; provides for full or partial reimbursement for the cost of a device and associated subscription that can be used to track activity and/or biometric data; provides for discounts on life insurance and on products or services intended to incent positive behavioral changes. This bill passed the Assembly and heads to the Senate Insurance Committee for consideration.

Public Hearings

~ The Assembly Standing Committee on Insurance will host a public hearing entitled "A Pause to Review: The Ongoing Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Insurance in New York" on May 20th.

The complete public hearing calendar can always be accessed [here](#).

State Agencies

From the New York Office of the Attorney General

AG Launches Investigation into Social Media Companies

New York Attorney General Letitia James [announced her office is launching an investigation](#) into social media companies in relation to the terror attack in Buffalo that claimed the lives of 10 individuals. The investigation will look into the social media companies and other online resources that the shooter may have used to discuss and amplify his plans to carry out the attack. Specifically, the investigation will focus on social media platforms that may have been used to stream, promote, or plan the event.

From the New York Office of the NYS Comptroller

Comptroller: Local Sales Tax Collections Up

Local government [sales tax collection rose](#) by 15.7% in April compared to the same month in 2021, according to an analysis released by NYS Comptroller DiNapoli. Overall the local sales tax collections totaled \$1.7 billion for April, up \$232 million from April of last year. New York City's collections totaled \$726 million, an increase of 10.5%—or nearly \$69 million—when compared to April of 2021.

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