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Lawmakers Search for Common Ground on Topline Budget Issues

From the perspective of state budget negotiations, the lay of the land post Easter is little changed from what we reported last week. Even with an early mini-heat wave on tap for the Capital Region this week, negotiations show little sign of heating up. The Legislature and the Governor remain at impasse.

The Legislature came into town Monday to pass a second budget extender effective through April 17 ([S6260/A6440](#)) to among other things, ensure state workers and certain contracts are paid, along with the continuation of certain programs. The extender also includes \$9 million in funding for Ryan White Clinics, apparently to mitigate some of the impacts of the elimination of the managed care 340B benefits that occurred on April 1. [According to reports](#), NYS Comptroller DiNapoli had issued a letter outlining the necessity of enacting a budget extender by noon today in order to ensure there are no delays in state worker payroll (approximately 83,000 workers are due to be paid this week). The Senate did pass the extender before noon, [with three minutes to spare](#). The Assembly did not make the noon deadline; however, the NYS Comptroller's office was [quoted](#) as saying "[they] assume there will not be a delay" in payroll this week.

At this point, as has been the case, it appears that many major policy differences between the Legislature and the Governor remain with the primary sticking points continuing to be related to proposed bail reform changes and the Governor's housing plan. Both houses adjourned after passing the extender with no specific return date. However, the legislative calendar calls for them to be back in session on Monday, April 17 (which also coincides with the expiration of the current budget extender).

Governor Nominates New Chief Judge: Governor Hochul [announced](#) today, she has nominated Judge Rowan Wilson to serve as Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals. Judge Wilson currently serves as an Associate Judge on the Court of Appeals, and was previously on the finalist list released by the Governor when she ultimately nominated Judge Hector LaSalle, who was voted down by the Senate. The Governor also announced her intention to nominate Caitlin Halligan as Associate Judge if Judge Wilson is confirmed as the Chief Judge thus creating a vacancy for Associate Judge.



From the Governor

Governor Announces Saratoga Streets Project

On April 5th Governor Hochul [announced](#) the start of a \$5.7 Million Complete Streets Project in City of Saratoga Springs. The project is tailored to enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety along Union Avenue in the City. There will be new sidewalks and bike lanes added to Union Ave right side along the Saratoga Race Course, and Union Avenue will also be resurfaced as part of the project. The project was planned and designed to as a component of the New York State Department of Transportation's "Complete Streets" initiative to consider safe, convenient access and mobility for roadway users of all ages and abilities.

Executive Orders:

There were no new Executive Orders issued this week.

Legislative News

Legislative Activity

The Legislature is not scheduled to be in session this week but members were in Albany today to pass a second budget extender. The schedule for the rest of the week is unclear but it seems as though the legislature will head home and then return next week if an agreement is not reached in the interim. The legislature has already introduced approximately 12,701 bills. However, the only bill the Senate and Assembly passed last week was the first budget extender. The second budget extender is also the only bill passed so far this week:

~ [S6260 \(Krueger\)](#) / [A6440 \(Weinstein\)](#) ~ The one-week budget extender that would allow the state to make payroll and pay other contractual obligations.

Public Hearings

There are no upcoming public hearings scheduled as of publications.

State Agencies

From the Office of the Attorney General

AG & Gov Urge Court to Order Independent Redistricting Commission to Redraw Congressional District Lines

On April 7th, Attorney General Letitia James and Governor Kathy Hochul [filed an amicus brief](#) in support of efforts to redraw New York's Congressional district lines rather than leaving the lines drawn by a court-appointed special master in place between now and the 2030 census. The state's Independent Redistricting Commission's (IRC) maps were rejected by the Legislature, and the Congressional maps drafted afterwards were challenged in the courts, resulting in a special master drawing lines ahead of the 2022 Election. In the brief, Attorney General James and Governor Hochul assert that while the special master's maps may have been appropriate for the 2022 Election, there is significant time for IRC to generate new maps and follow the process outlined in the New York State Constitution for Congressional maps going forward.

From the Office of the Comptroller

Comptroller: Inconsistent Oversight and Guidance Left New York's Group Home Residents at Risk During Pandemic

The Office for People With Developmental Disabilities' (OPWDD) inadequate emergency management coordination left people living in group homes at risk during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new [audit](#) released today by New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli. OPWDD reported 657 people died from COVID-19, and more than 13,000 contracted the virus in its residential programs from March 2020 to April 2022. DiNapoli's audit found OPWDD did not provide consistent guidance to some 6,929 group homes across the state during the first wave of the deadly pandemic, though the audit did not establish a causal relationship between OPWDD's actions and COVID cases. As explained by the department, certified facilities run by nonprofits (6,921), as opposed to those that are state-run (eight), are required to have their own emergency policies and procedures in place, even though they are home to 99% of the state's 34,117 group home residents.

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