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Budget Pathway Remains Elusive

With the apparently theoretical budget deadline and end of the FY 2023 state fiscal year March 31st having come and gone, the focus shifted Monday to passing a budget extender effective through April 10 ([S6200/A6063](#)) to among other things, ensure state workers and certain contracts are paid, along with the continuation of certain programs - the NYS Comptroller has indicated there would need to be a deal in place by the end of the day today in order to process the state payroll on time for payday this Thursday. The extender provides a modicum of breathing room for lawmakers and staff as they seek solutions to the myriad of complexities that make up the FY 2024 budget negotiations.

At this point, it appears that many major policy differences between the Legislature and the Governor remain including those related to bail reform, the Governor's housing plan, MTA transit funding, Charter School Caps, and Medicaid reimbursement and other health care financing issues.

As the Passover (beginning Wednesday, April 5) and Easter (Sunday, April 9) holidays approach, the coming week will likely be a busy one for those involved in negotiations as work continues to break the current budget logjam that would allow movement toward an agreed to final budget, and as advocacy efforts surge for last-minute solutions.

Of note, as negotiations drag on the post budget session, which is when many of the policy issues and local bills will be debated and passed by the Senate and Assembly, will become more compressed. It will remain unclear what the end of session schedule will look like until a budget agreement is reached.

Office of Cannabis Management (OCM): The OCM released its Two-Year Medical Cannabis Report, which they also submitted to the Legislature and Governor as required by law. The report, [found here](#), contains data on the Medical Cannabis Program including information on the number of practitioners participating in NYS, patient registrations, and the number of medical cannabis products that were dispensed. The **Cannabis Control Board (CCB)** announced new CAURD [license approvals](#) and a new [lab permit](#) at their meeting today (Monday, April 3).



From the Governor

Heightened Monitoring in Response to Increase in False Threats to Schools

Governor Kathy Hochul [announced](#) heightened monitoring in response to the recent increase in "swatting" calls, or the false reporting of a serious law enforcement emergency, such as a bomb threat, hostage situation, or homicide, across the state and country. In her release, the Governor said she met with state public safety and education leaders to coordinate preparedness and safety measures to ensure all children remain safe in schools and that all school districts after several schools across New York State reported incidents of "swatting" last week, with the caller [reportedly](#) falsely stating there was an active shooter in local schools.

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 are in Albany today to pass the budget extender. The schedule for the rest of the week is unclear but it is likely there will be a break for the holidays beginning Wednesday and then a return next week if an agreement is not reached. The legislature has already introduced approximately 12,249 bills. The Senate and Assembly passed 59 bills last week, of particular note:

~ [A1060A \(Paulin\) / S1043A \(Stavisky\)](#) This bill would allow New York State pharmacists to execute a non-patient specific order from a licensed physician, certified nurse practitioner, or the Commissioner of Health for the dispensing of self-administered hormonal contraceptives.

Public Hearings

There are no upcoming public hearings scheduled as of publication.

State Agencies

From the Office of the Attorney General

AG Announces Agreement to End “No-Poach” Practices in Title Insurance Industry

New York Attorney General Letitia James [announced](#) an [agreement to end anti-worker practices](#) by the nation’s largest title insurance company, Fidelity National Financial, Inc. (Fidelity). An investigation by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) discovered that Fidelity and its competitors entered into illegal no-poach agreements where they would not solicit each other’s employees, reducing competition and therefore wages and opportunities for workers. As a result of the agreement, Fidelity will terminate any existing no-poach agreements, pay the state \$3.5 million, and cooperate with OAG’s ongoing investigations in the industry.

From the Office of the Comptroller

Comptroller: Wall Street Bonuses Dropped 26% from 2022

Wall Street’s 2022 average bonus paid to securities employees dropped to \$176,700, a 26% decline from the previous year’s \$240,400, [according to New York State Comptroller](#) Thomas P. DiNapoli’s annual estimate. Rising interest rates and fear of a recession led to significantly less profits on Wall Street after a record year in 2021. As a result, bonuses returned to pre-pandemic levels, which will mean a decline in related income tax revenue, as anticipated by New York state and the city.

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
50 Charles Lindbergh Boulevard · Suite 601 · Uniondale, NY 11553 (516) 794-9730
500 Plum Street · Suite 104 · Syracuse NY 13204 · (315) 396-7535
www.parkstrategies.com

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