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Annual Budget Battle Winding Down

With the last budget extender technically expiring last Friday, the Comptroller indicated a budget extender or agreement was not needed until tomorrow, May 2, 2023, in order for the state to continue to meet its payment obligations. Late last week, the Governor and the Legislature began to make progress on the budget negotiations with the [Governor holding a press conference](#) last Thursday announcing a "conceptual agreement" on a \$229 Billion state budget. Today, the legislature began introducing amended budget bills indicating an end to the budget saga this year. It remains possible, but unlikely the legislature would introduce and pass a budget extender tomorrow since final budget bills are all but completed. It appears much more likely at the current time that final budget bills will continue to be introduced and will be considered and passed by the legislature this week. Our Park Strategies Team is reviewing the budget bills as they are released and will continue to provide updates on the budget's contents as the overall picture comes into focus. *Again, as we have been saying since April 1, stay tuned!*

According to a [press release issued by Governor Hochul](#) when she announced the budget agreement, the following highlights are included in the final budget:

- **Improving public safety** by providing judges greater discretion to set bail for serious crimes; investing \$347 million in evidence-based gun violence prevention initiatives; \$170 million to support the implementation of discovery reform for prosecutors and defenders
- **Investing \$1 billion in mental health**, transforming the continuum of care by increasing inpatient psychiatric treatment capacity, dramatically expanding outpatient services, and boosting insurance coverage
- Creating a **stronger health care system** for the future through an additional \$1 billion in health care capital funding and expanded Medicaid coverage for more than 7.8 million low-income New Yorkers

More Highlights in the "From the Governor" Section Below



Legislative News

Legislative Activity

The Legislature is scheduled to be in session on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday this week. After today, there are only 19 scheduled session days left on the [2023 session calendar](#). The legislature has already introduced approximately 13,224 bills. Last week, 40 bills passed in the legislature. Of particular note was:

~ S5889 (Breslin) / A3172A (Zebrowski) This bill allows an auto insurer to waive the right to inspect a motor vehicle prior to issuing an insurance policy if such insurer has filed a plan of operation to ensure that vehicles covered under such policy have not sustained physical damage. This bill has passed both Houses and will be sent to the Governor for consideration.

Public Hearings

~ **May 3rd**, the Senate Standing Committees on Education and New York City Education will host a public hearing in Albany to “examine school policies related to discipline and suspension, and to hear from stakeholders about proposed legislation, S.1040 Solutions Not Suspensions Act.”

~ **May 11th**, the Assembly Standing Committees on Banks and on Economic Development, Job Creation and Industry will host a public hearing on “Cannabis Banking in New York State.”

~ **May 12th**, the Senate Standing Committees on Education and New York City Education will host a public hearing in NYC to “examine school policies related to discipline and suspension, and to hear from stakeholders about proposed legislation, S.1040 Solutions Not Suspensions Act.”

From the Governor

Gov’s Budget Highlights

~Protecting **reproductive health care** by investing \$100.7 million to fund abortion providers, expanding access to abortion care for SUNY and CUNY students, providing access to over-the-counter contraception at pharmacies

~**Record funding for P-12 schools and higher education**,

including the largest annual School Aid amount of \$34.5 billion

~ Increasing the **minimum wage** for three years, after which the State’s minimum wage would increase at a rate determined by the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W)

~ Combating climate change and investing in energy affordability by implementing first-in-the-nation **zero-emission requirements for new building construction**

Executive Orders (EO):

There were no new Executive Orders issued this week.

State Agencies

From the Office of the Attorney General

AG: Takes Action to Protect New Yorkers' Homes and Combat Deed Theft

New York Attorney General Letitia James, State Senator Brian Kavanagh, State Senator Zellnor Myrie, and Assemblymember Helene Weinstein [announced](#) new legislation to strengthen protections and remedies for victims of deed theft and bolster the Office of the Attorney General's (OAG) ability to prosecute these crimes. The two bills – one addressing criminal challenges and the other focused on changes to civil laws – would establish a crime of deed theft and help keep New Yorkers in their homes. Deed theft occurs when someone takes the title, or deed, to another person's home without the homeowner's knowledge or approval. It has become a popular tactic used by scammers to illegally obtain ownership of a property.

From the Office of the New York State Comptroller

Comptroller: State's Paid Family Leave Program Helping Millions of New Yorkers

Payments under New York's Paid Family Leave (PFL) program rose steadily between 2018 and 2021 as the amount of allowable time off and weekly cash benefits increased. Almost eight million workers were covered under PFL, with \$872 million paid on approximately 156,000 claims in 2021, the latest year for which PFL data is available from the state Department of Financial Services, [according to an analysis](#) by State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli.

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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