

NYS Legislative Session Concludes

The 2024 New York State legislative session has concluded. The end of the session was largely overshadowed by Governor Hochul's directive to the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to halt the implementation of congestion pricing indefinitely, leaving a budget shortfall of over a billion dollars for the MTA. The Governor and leaders of the Assembly and Senate have indicated that they may call a special session in fall 2024 to replace the funds in the MTA's budget. The Governor proposed a payroll tax on NYC businesses to replace the funds lost by delaying the implementation of congestion pricing, but the legislature did not adopt the plan or any other to fund the MTA before the close of the session.

When the 805 bills passed this session are delivered to Governor Hochul, she has the option to sign, veto, negotiate chapter amendments, or allow the bills to become law without her signature. If the Governor vetoes a bill, Democrats hold a supermajority in both houses, which they may utilize to override a gubernatorial veto.

Below are some of the most significant accomplishments of the state session, including both legislation and budget items:

Housing

- New 485-a tax incentive to build housing and a six-year extension for existing projects in the expired 421-a program
- Elimination of certain density restrictions in Manhattan
- Pilot program for basement apartments, restricted to parts of the Bronx, Manhattan, and Brooklyn
- Creation of a good cause eviction program to protect tenants in the five boroughs of NYC and other areas that opt-in to the program

Public Safety and Technology

- Authorization for NYC to expand its red light camera program, quadrupling the number of cameras at intersections around the five boroughs from 150 to 600
- SAFE for Kids Act
 - Would greatly restrict minors' access to social media algorithmic feeds without parental consent
- Child Protection Act
 - Would prohibit websites from gathering, using, sharing, or otherwise processing personal data of minors
- Repeal of lifetime felon jury ban

Labor, Employment & Business

- New requirement that the state Gaming Commission select three candidates for downstate casino licensing by March 2026
- Short-Term Rental Registry
 - Would create a registry for all short-term rentals in New York and allow municipalities to levy taxes on the rentals



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- Wrongful Death Act
 - Would alter the state's wrongful death statute and make it easier for families to sue for emotional damages after the loss of a loved one

Energy & Sustainability

- Climate Change Superfund Act
 - Would require companies that have contributed to climate change to contribute to a climate action fund
 - Aims to raise \$3B annually from polluters to help pay for climate mitigation measures and infrastructure improvements

Miscellaneous

- Creation of a statewide Artificial Intelligence Consortium to study and develop recommendations for AI
- Enabling local boards of elections to set up absentee ballot drop boxes

Looking Ahead to 2025 Legislative Session

The NYS legislature did not ultimately address or pass several bills that gained attention throughout the year, including:

- NY HEAT Act
 - Would cap utility prices for low- and moderate-income New Yorkers and eliminate an existing subsidy for new gas connections
- Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act
 - Would require companies that sell plastics to pay for its recycling and require companies to make all plastic products recyclable
- Medical Aid in Dying Act
 - Would provide terminally ill patients with the opportunity to end their lives
- Bottle Bill
 - Would expand the types of bottles redeemable and increase the five-cent deposit on bottles
- Consumer and Small Business Protection Act
 - Would expand state business law to prohibit unfair and abusive practices

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