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RMS End of Week Update 1/9/2026



New York's Legislative Session Begins

State lawmakers convened this year's legislative session at the state Capitol Wednesday with a promise to address the state's persistently high cost of living and respond to federal actions that have impacted New York.

"The stakes have never been higher," said Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie. "What we do here in New York in these coming months will resonate across the country."

Lawmakers from the democratic party in NY view this year's legislative session as an opportunity to insulate the state's residents from destructive decisions made by the administration of President Trump and Republicans in Congress.

Those decisions are wide-ranging. New York is expecting a \$4.2 billion budget gap that's largely the result of changes in federal spending on health care made in the "One Big Beautiful Bill" approved by Congress this summer. Democrats said those changes and other federal funding decisions will factor into how the state thinks about its own budget

and what can be done to help protect residents from the potential impact, including higher health care costs anticipated by industry leaders and insurance companies.

There's also an appetite among Democrats at the state Capitol for new laws that would help immigrants avoid being detained by federal immigration officers.

"They're being targeted and marginalized," said state Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

Stewart-Cousins specifically mentioned an interest in advancing "goals set forth in New York For All," a bill that would prohibit state and local resources from being used in a way that could aid in federal deportation efforts. That bill did not have enough support to pass either chamber of the state Legislature during last year's legislative session.

Several Democrats have since introduced bills that would create new protections for immigrants, including measures that would prohibit federal immigration officers from entering hospitals and schools without a judicial warrant.

"Navigating what comes next will require discipline, collaboration and resolve," Stewart-Cousins said. "In moments like these, we have to be the adults in the room."

Additionally, they intend to deliver results on the objective of lowering costs for everyday New Yorkers.

A top priority in that area for Democrats this year is the cost of child care, which averages \$14,621 per child annually statewide, [according to a report from the state comptroller's office last year.](#)

"It's not just about education," said Assemblywoman Michaelle Solages, a Democrat from Nassau County who brought her 4-year-old daughter to the state Capitol Wednesday to advocate on the issue. "Too many people are opting out of the workforce because they can't afford childcare," Solages said. "My daughter here is in pre-K, and it has been a relief not having to pay childcare."

Solages and other Democrats want to focus the state's efforts on expanding pre-K to school districts that don't have it. Some districts decline to use state funding to provide pre-K, said state Sen. James Skoufis, a Hudson Valley Democrat.

"We need to require our public schools to educate the 4-year-olds throughout New York state," Skoufis said.

But the list of areas in which Democrats could attempt to cut costs for residents is not short and Republicans in the state Legislature delivered a reminder of those gaps in their own remarks Wednesday.

While Democrats have sought to lower costs by investing in social services, Republicans urged them to address the state's rapidly rising energy costs.

“The average New York household pays well above the national average for electricity, heating and utility bills,” said Assembly Minority Leader Will Barclay. “Blaming Washington does not lower a single electric bill in Buffalo.”

The Assembly Republicans circulated their “Fight for New York” plan on Wednesday, which includes legislation they have sponsored to lower household expenses, reduce energy bills, expand access to affordable health care, prevent future tax hikes, limit government spending, help with childcare costs and eliminate taxes on tips, overtime and private pensions of up to \$100,000.

Lawmakers have another incentive to deliver for New Yorkers this year as well. Every member of the state Legislature is up for reelection in November. That means what they choose to do over the next six months will be part of the litmus test their constituents use to decide if they deserve to stick around. Several Democrats are already expected to face primary elections this year.

State Senate Minority Leader Rob Ortt said Republicans are ready to work with Democrats to achieve their common goal of a more affordable state but that residents will ultimately judge if they were successful. “And if the answer is no, we need to do a better job,” Ortt said.

To view Speaker Heastie's opening session remarks please click [here](#).
To view Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins opening session remarks please click [here](#).

To view the Legislative Session Calendar please click [here](#).

For more information please click [here](#).

2026 State Of The State Address

The 2026 State of the State Address will take place **January 13, 2026, at 1:00 PM (Webcast [here](#))**. As in previous years Governor Hochul has already releasing her State of the State Proposals with the first three being released this week. Below please find an overview of the State of the State Proposals to date.

To watch the State of the State Address on January 13, 2026, at 1:00 PM please click [here](#).

State of the State Proposal 1: Protecting Kids Online, Restricting AI Chatbots and Combating the Youth Mental Health Crisis

Governor Hochul's first State of the State proposal, is aimed to help protect children from online predators, scammers and harmful AI chatbots integrated on online platforms.

Additionally, the Governor is proposing a statewide expansion of Teen Mental Health First Aid training, designed to give young people the tools to identify, understand, and effectively respond to signs of mental health and substance abuse challenges among their friends and peers.

“As New York’s first mom Governor, the well-being and safety of our children has always been one of my top priorities, and today we are continuing to break new ground to give our kids the tools and safeguards they need to contend with the unprecedented mental health challenges and real world dangers that can sometimes be a byproduct of navigating today’s digital world,” Governor Hochul said. “These proposals will create a nation-leading standard that will ensure our kids’ safety in online and real world environments where they spend time.”

New Protections for Kids on Online Platforms

The Governor’s proposed legislative package to keep kids safe from emerging threats on social media and online gaming platforms will include:

- Expanding Age Verification: Expanding requirements for platforms to conduct age verification, including online game platforms.
- Privacy by Default: Kids will be set to the highest privacy settings on covered platforms by default, meaning non-connections cannot message kids, view their profile, or tag them in content. Location settings will be turned off by default, and children under 13 must receive parental approval for new connections.
- Disabling AI Chatbot Features: Disabling certain AI chatbot features on social media platforms for kids.
- Parental Controls: Parents must be able to set limits on children’s financial transactions.

Expanding Youth Mental Health Training For Hundreds of Thousands of Teens

Governor Hochul will propose to make Teen Mental Health First Aid training available to all 10th graders across New York State. New York would phase in a commitment to make training available to more than 180,000 students annually, ensuring that over time most high school students will have the basic skills to support themselves and each other. This training is designed for young people between the ages 15 and 18 so they can identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges in their friends and peers. It equips them with skills to recognize common signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges; the impact of bullying and

school violence on mental health; how to have impactful conversations with classmates about mental health concerns or to seek help from an adult; formal and informal support, and self-care.

As part of this initiative, the State will also offer new Youth Mental Health First Aid training for adults who regularly interact with youth in schools and community programs. This nationally recognized curriculum introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a 5-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations.

To view the full press release on the first State of the State proposal please click [here](#).

State of the State Proposal 2: Proposals to Crack Down on 3D-Printed Guns and Other Illegal Firearms

Governor Hochul's second State of the State proposal is a proposal to strengthen New York's gun laws by cracking down on 3D-printed and illegal firearms. The new legislation would establish criminal penalties for the manufacture of 3D-printed firearms and order minimum safety standards to be established for 3D printer manufacturers to block the production of firearms and firearm components. The proposed legislation would also require gun manufacturers to design their pistols so they cannot be quickly and easily modified into illegal machine guns, and require police departments and sheriffs' offices to report recoveries of all 3D printed guns to the state.

“Public safety is my top priority. When I took office, I made a promise to New Yorkers to attack the gun violence epidemic head-on, and as gun technology continues to evolve, so do our strongest-in-the-nation gun laws,” Governor Hochul said. “From the iron pipeline to the plastic pipeline, these proposals will keep illegal ghost guns off of New York streets, and enhance measures to track and block the production of dangerous and illegal firearms in our state. I remain committed to continuing the progress we saw in 2025 to reduce gun violence in New York and ensuring our laws remain the strongest and safest in the nation.”

The proposal would:

- Make it a crime for a person to intentionally sell, distribute, or possess digital instructions to illegally manufacture or produce a firearm or component parts without a license.
- Mandate the reporting of 3D printed guns to the Criminal Gun Clearinghouse database maintained by the New York State Police.
- Create a first-in-the-nation policy that requires the establishment of minimum safety standards for 3D printer manufacturers to ensure their products are equipped with technology that blocks the printer from creating firearms and component parts.

- Require gun manufacturers to design pistols so they cannot be quickly and easily modified into DIY machine guns through the use of illegal devices, such as Glock switches.

To view the full press release on the Second State of the State proposal please click [here](#).

State of the State Proposal 3: Universal Child Care For NY Children Under 5

Governor Hochul's third State of the State proposal is a proposal to deliver affordable, universal childcare for children under five years of age across New York State. The Governor will partner with Mayor Zohran Mamdani to deliver free childcare for two-year-olds in New York City, in addition to strengthening the existing 3K program to achieve universal care and ultimately, serve all families across the city.

"There's one thing that every family in New York can agree on, the cost of childcare is simply too high," Governor Hochul said. "As New York's first mom Governor, fighting for New York's families has always been at the core of my agenda. Since taking office, I've put families front and center, fighting to make our state more affordable and laying the groundwork to deliver universal childcare. Today, I'm proud to partner with Mayor Mamdani and leaders across our state to make this a reality, turning that foundation into a concrete roadmap that will transform the lives of working parents and kids across our state."

New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani said, "Over the past 14 months, a movement was born to fight for a city where every New Yorker could afford a life of dignity, and every family could afford to raise their kids. Today, Governor Hochul and I meet that movement as we celebrate our joint commitment to universal childcare. This victory represents much more than a triumph of city and state government working in partnership — it is proof that when New Yorkers come together, we can transform the way the government serves working families."

Governor Hochul's State of the State investments will commit to delivering affordable childcare for nearly 100,000 more kids. Through this \$1.7 billion increased investment, the total FY27 investment will be \$4.5 billion for childcare and prekindergarten services statewide.

As part of Governor Hochul's 2026 State of the State, this proposal will:

- Make Pre-K truly universal statewide,
- Partner with New York City to launch the new Mayor's signature 2-Care program and finally realize the promise of universal 3K access in New York City,
- Support other counties in building out new childcare pilots that offer high-quality affordable care to families regardless of income, and
- Expand childcare subsidies to tens of thousands of additional families.

Alongside these commitments, the Governor will launch an Office of Child Care and Early Education to steer the implementation of high-quality, universal childcare for New York families.

Achieving Truly Universal Pre-K

While four-year-olds in some parts of New York have long had access to Pre-K, there are dozens of school districts that have not yet been able to make it available. Governor Hochul is providing additional support to ensure truly universal Pre-K for all four-year-olds in the State by the start of the 2028-2029 school year.

The State will not only fund additional seats to achieve universality but will also increase funding for existing seats, bringing them up to the greater of \$10,000 or the applicable school district's current selected foundation aid per pupil, so that districts have what they need to provide high-quality Pre-K. This combination reflects a commitment of roughly a half-billion dollars and will ensure that every child in New York State enters kindergarten ready to learn.

Launching 2-Care and Reaching Universal 3k Access in NYC

New York City has already launched universal Pre-K and 3K, and Governor Hochul will partner with Mayor Zohran Mamdani to age this program down and launch an initiative to offer entirely free childcare for two-year-olds within New York City. The Governor is committing to fully fund the first two years of the city's implementation. As envisioned by the incoming mayoral administration, the first year of the program will focus on high-need areas selected by New York City and expand to serve all interested families across the city by year 4. In addition, the Governor will partner with the Mayor to strengthen and fix the city's 3K program and ensure it achieves its promise of universal access.

Continuing Access to Low-Cost, Affordable Child Care Assistance Programs

Governor Hochul will continue to grow the State's investment in childcare subsidies for those that need it most with a \$1.2 billion increased investment, bringing the total available for subsidies to over \$3 billion. This is more than 3.5 times more than the \$832 million provided prior to the Governor taking office, and a nearly 40 percent increase from what was made available in the FY 2026 Enacted Budget.

Piloting Innovative Community Care Models Across New York Counties

In 2026, Governor Hochul will launch a new pilot project for children in counties outside of New York City that are also ready to launch childcare in more expansive ways in their communities. The Governor will launch a new NY State pilot, designed to support counties in working towards universal access to affordable, year-round, full-day care for thousands of families across these communities, regardless of income. Programs will be a joint collaboration between participating counties and New York State.

Office of Child Care and Early Education

A new Office of Child Care and Early Education will drive the implementation of high-quality, universal childcare in New York State. The Office will oversee and support roll out of universal Pre-K, continued investment in 3K, launch of 2-Care and other innovative care options, expansion and improvement of vouchers, and ongoing support for the workforce.

Supporting the Workforce Through Early Childhood Educator Preparation

Governor Hochul's plan to strengthen New York's early childhood education workforce includes expanding existing workforce scholarships, seeking opportunities for new Workforce Pell grants, and directing SUNY and CUNY to take a number of steps to expand and streamline early childhood education programs.

Expanding the Child and Dependent Care Credit to Better Support Families

Governor Hochul will expand and simplify the child and dependent care tax credit to provide an additional average benefit of \$575 for 230,000 tax filers. She will also undertake a thorough review of existing tax incentives for employers with the goal of helping them better serve the childcare needs of their employees.

To view the full press release on the Second State of the State proposal please click [here](#).

New York Governor Hochul Wants 'Recourse' When ICE Agents Act Improperly

A recent article in POLITICO (linked [here](#)) discussed Governor Hochul's desire for expanded legal options for New Yorkers negatively impacted by President Donald Trump's aggressive immigration enforcement efforts.

"Let's start holding these people accountable," Governor Hochul said Thursday morning during an appearance on MSNOW's "Morning Joe."

The governor is expected to propose a measure that would enable New Yorkers to file lawsuits in state court against federal officials accused of violating a person's constitutional rights — a plan she's expected to formally detail in her State of the State address next week. Similar bills have been introduced in the Democratic-dominated state Legislature in response to Trump's push to significantly expand deportations.

"New Yorkers who have had their constitutional rights violated because of an ICE agent — whether you're a member of the media who was beaten up or someone whose business has been ransacked because the ICE agents come in and make them lose money or someone whose mother is murdered — they would have recourse against these individuals," Governor Hochul said.

The proposal is being weighed after an Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent shot and killed a mother in Minneapolis when a group of people gathered to protest an enforcement operation. Outraged Democrats across the country condemned the incident while Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem accused the woman of committing “an act of domestic terrorism”, though no official investigation has put forth that conclusion and thus far no evidence has been put forward to support that claim.

Governor Hochul in her TV appearance blasted the death of the Minnesota woman, identified as 37-year-old Renee Nicole Good. The top Democrat in the state Senate, Andrea Stewart-Cousins, this week called for the passage of a plan that would prevent law enforcement from coordinating with federal immigration officers. Democratic state lawmakers have also called for bills that would prevent ICE agents from wearing masks while carrying out official tasks.

“Right now, federal officials who violate our rights — even deprive us of our lives — can’t be held accountable in state court,” said Brooklyn Democratic state Sen. Zellnor Myrie. “The Minnesota shooting is an obvious wake-up call: New York needs to step up and make sure we can enforce our civil rights.”

Hochul’s likely Republican opponent, Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman, has pursued the opposite track: He’s backed Trump’s enforcement policies and signed an order supporting law enforcement officials concealing their identity.

Blakeman called Good’s death “the predictable result of radical local elected officials who encouraged lawlessness and hostility toward law enforcement.” The state Democratic Committee accused him of trying to “blame the victim” while being unwilling to criticize Trump’s “dangerous policies that put American families at risk.”

And Blakeman criticized Hochul’s plan to broaden legal avenues against federal officials, warning it would undermine law enforcement.

“New York doesn’t have a law enforcement problem — it has a crime problem,” Blakeman said in a statement. “But instead of standing with the men and women who protect our communities, Gov. Hochul has chosen to demonize them. When Albany attacks law enforcement, criminals hear it loud and clear, and innocent New Yorkers pay the price.”

“I’m so sickened as a mom that there’s a child that woke up yesterday, a 6-year-old, who had a loving mother and goes to bed an orphan,” Hochul said. “I’ll tell you, I’m going to defend rights — at least in New York.”

The governor's proposal is the latest effort by New York Democrats to wade into the fraught politics of immigration enforcement by promising to counteract the federal government's pursuit of undocumented immigrants.

To view the full article please click [here](#).

Registration For The New York State Association Of Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislators 55th Annual Legislative Conference Open

The New York State Association of Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislators, 55th Annual Legislative Caucus Weekend will take place **February 13–15, 2026 in Albany, New York.**

The conference topics include budget, appropriations and taxation; business and economic development; energy, environment and technology infrastructure; civil rights, judiciary and history; community outreach and civic engagement; criminal justice; education and labor; emerging leaders; foreign affairs and national security; women's rights and activism; and culture, music and the arts.

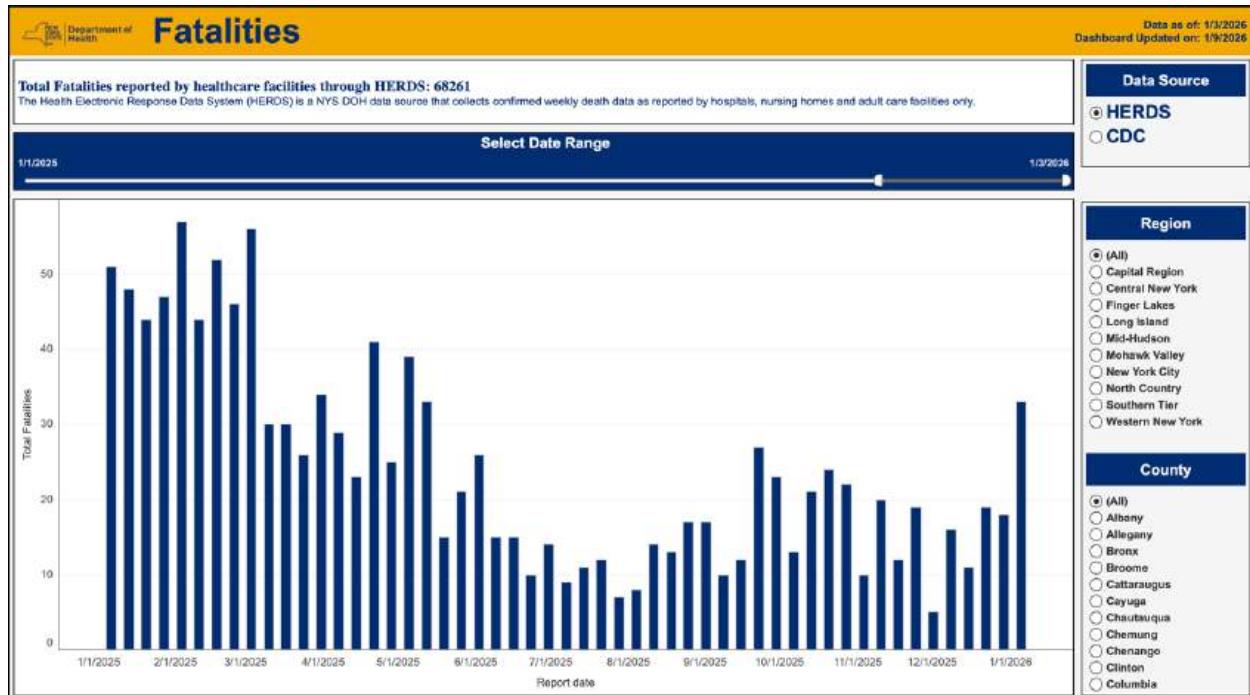
For more information or to register and buy tickets to the conference please click [here](#).

NYS COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard

Use this link to view the State's updated [COVID-19 Hub](#).

NYS COVID-19 Fatalities Tracker

Below we have included the Fatalities Tracker with the webpage where updated numbers can be found throughout the week linked [here](#).



Helpful Links and Resources

[**Empire State Development Tariff Resource Guide**](#)

[**Eliminating Distractions In Schools Resource**](#)

[Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[Department of Financial Services information and resources](#)

[New York COVID-19 Vaccine Information Page](#)

Department of Health

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>

[COVID-19 Guidance for Medicaid Providers](#)

Office of Mental Health

<https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/covid-19-resources.html>

OPWDD

<https://opwdd.ny.gov/coronavirus-guidance>

State Education Department

<http://www.op.nysesd.gov/COVID-19.html>

NYS Department of Labor

<https://dol.ny.gov/>