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## RMS End of Week Update 4/10/2026



Lori Van Buren/ Times Union

### **Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes Announces Her Retirement**

New York State Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes announced on Wednesday that she will not seek re-election after representing parts of Buffalo for 23 years.

The Democratic lawmaker said she is focusing on her health and is expected to undergo surgery at ECMC in the coming days. She plans to serve out the remainder of her term.

"I've been in office longer than my grandson. He wasn't even born yet. And now he has a daughter," Assemblymember Peoples-Stokes said. "Particularly given that my daughter is not living, I want to be here for them, and sometimes you got to be in Buffalo to do that." Assemblymember Peoples-Stokes was first elected to represent New York's 141st assembly district in 2003. She has served as Assembly Majority Leader since 2019, becoming the first African American and woman to hold the position.

"It's been really rewarding for me to have accomplished what I have accomplished, and I'm grateful for it," Peoples-Stokes said. "And I know that at some point there will be a new opportunity, and I don't know what it is, but I know God does, and I'll be ready when he shows me what it is."

Because of the timing of that announcement, after the petitioning period to get on the ballot, the Erie County Democratic Committee will choose who appears on the ballot as their party's nominee. A new Democratic nominee must be selected by April 14. Multiple outlets have reported that Leah Halton-Pope, the majority leader of the Buffalo Common Council and a former top staffer for Peoples-Stokes, is expected to be their pick.

"When she departs the Assembly at the end of this session, she will leave big shoes to fill... Her wisdom and knowledge have been invaluable to me and to so many that have had the privilege of serving with her. Crystal has been more than a majority leader to me. She has been my friend, advisor, sister and my biggest supporter," Assembly Speaker Heastie said.

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

### **Budget Update**

Earlier this week the state Legislature returned to Albany to approve another week-long extension of state spending as negotiations around this year's stage budget continue to stall. The FY 2027 budget was due April 1<sup>st</sup>; the second budget extender passed earlier this week expires on Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at which time another extender will need to be passed if a budget agreement is not reached.

Senate Deputy Majority Leader Michael Gianaris told the press that "The leaders are talking, the staffs are talking. I think there were some meetings this morning that were productive...But it's a long way to go".

Governor Hochul met Tuesday morning with Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie and Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins to continue state budget negotiations. They emerged from that meeting without an update on where discussions stand on the spending plan. The issues preventing a broader deal on the set of bills that comprise the state budget remain unchanged from last week.

Those issues include:

- 1) Governor Hochul's proposed amendments to New York's mandates to reduce carbon emissions. Legislators remain resistant to Governor Hochul's proposed changes to the state's mandates for reducing carbon emissions under the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act of 2019. While the exact language of Governor Hochul's proposal hasn't been shared publicly, lawmakers have a sense of what she's seeking. They're open to compromise, Senator Gianaris said. "I think all sides are trying to find something that can be agreed upon," he said;
- 2) Governor Hochul's package of proposals intended to lower the cost of car insurance. "I see in the governor's proposal how it would benefit the insurance companies," Senator Gianaris said. "What I don't see is how it would benefit consumers". Governor Hochul said Monday that, in response to those concerns, she's considering changes to a state law that requires auto insurance companies to return profits in excess of a certain threshold back to consumers; and
- 3) Proposed tax hikes in the Assembly and Senate one-house budgets to close the New York City projected \$5.4 billion budget gap. Governor Hochul has consistently said she is opposed to raising both income taxes and corporate taxes. "We want businesses that provide meaningful jobs to remain in the state of New York," state Budget Director Blake Washington said. "We don't need to provide extra impetus for anybody to leave."

The legislature will be back in Albany April 13<sup>th</sup>, and we will continue to keep you updated as the budget process moves forward.

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

### **NYS DOH Invites NYS Residents Apply To Serve On The Medicaid Advisory Committee And The Beneficiary Advisory Council**

The New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) invites NYS residents to contribute their voices and lived experiences by applying to serve on the Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC) and the Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC). The MAC and BAC provide critical input to help guide the development and administration of the NYS Medicaid program and Child Health Plus (CHPlus). Their collective insight supports the delivery of high-quality, cost-effective care for NYS Medicaid and CHPlus members statewide.

The MAC and BAC Membership Application is available in the 16 most spoken non-English languages in NYS. Interested individuals must complete the MAC and BAC Member Application, located on the [NYS DOH "Medicaid Advisory Committee \(MAC\) and Beneficiary Advisory Council \(BAC\)" web page](#), which takes approximately five

minutes to complete. Please note: The MAC members will serve a three-year term and BAC members will serve a two-year term.

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

**Helpful Links and Resources**

**RMS Budget One House Revenue and Tax Table**

**RMS Health/Mental Hygiene One House Budget Table**

**Assembly Yellow Book**

**Senate Blue Blook**

**FY 27 Senate Finance Economic and Revenue Report**

**FY27 Assembly Ways & Means Economic and Revenue Report**

**Empire State Development Tariff Resource Guide**

**NYS COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard**

**NYS COVID-19 Fatalities Tracker**

**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.nysed.gov/COVID-19.html>

**NYS Department of Labor**

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