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## **RMS End of Week Update 6/19/2026**



***New York State Officials Join The Celebration To Honor The Knicks 2026 NBA Championship Win!***

## **Governor Hochul Joins Assembly Majority Leader Peoples-Stokes For Buffalo Juneteenth Parade And Festival**



Governor Hochul joined Assembly Majority Leader Peoples-Stokes, Senator Baskin, Senator Webb, Assemblymember Hyndman, Assemblymember Meeks, and Assemblymember Burroughs in Buffalo for the Juneteenth Parade and Festival recently.

At that event Governor Hochul signed into law a bill officially adding the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway into the state scenic byway system. The first phase of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway encompasses 176.76 miles and links 22 places of significant association with Harriet Tubman, the Underground Railroad, and freedom seekers. The byway will begin in the City of Auburn in Cayuga County, continuing from Seneca County through Ontario, Wayne, Monroe, Orleans, Niagara and Erie Counties before reaching its western terminus in Niagara Falls in Niagara County. With this legislation now in effect, the State Department of Transportation, which has been working with the Underground Railroad Consortium of New York State for a number of years to develop a Corridor Management Plan, will soon begin installing signage marking the route connecting Underground Railroad landmarks from Central through Western New York.

**To view the full press release please click [here](#).**

### **Governor Hochul Releases The First Wave Of Regulatory Reforms In Her ‘EXPRESS NY’ Initiative**

This week Governor Hochul announced the first series of state actions to improve government service delivery through her EXPRESS NY initiative, with 50 actions being taken across 22 state agencies. According to the Governor these actions are projected to save New Yorkers tens of millions of dollars in unnecessary fees and compliance costs and over one million hours of time spent navigating the regulatory process.

“The purpose of government should be to work for the people, not against them, and every New Yorker can agree that bureaucratic obstacles stand in the way, wasting time and money,” Governor Hochul said. “After hearing directly from New Yorkers, we’re cutting red tape, making it easier to build housing and infrastructure, access healthcare, and cut down on burdensome fees and paperwork — delivering a more efficient government for every New Yorker.”

This initiative was launched last fall by Governor Hochul, who asked state agencies at the time to sift through their regulations and identify areas that could either be changed or stricken altogether to benefit New Yorkers. Her administration then engaged stakeholders in their various subject areas before Governor Hochul expanded that outreach to the broader public in February.

The EXPRESS NY program received nearly 4,000 recommendations from residents across the state, Governor Hochul said in a letter that accompanied the new regulatory actions released Monday morning. “I’ve heard from countless parents, workers, community leaders, and business owners about bureaucratic obstacles that stand in their way and unnecessarily waste time and money”.

These new actions would impact 22 agencies and save more than 1 million hours for New Yorkers, according to Governor Hochul.

State agencies in New York often promulgate regulations under new laws approved by the state Legislature but those statutes also often leave them with the power to propose the rules with some discretion. As a result, it's also often within the power of state agencies to rescind or modify regulations already on the books as long as that doesn't conflict with the state Legislature's intent.

The 50 actions announced Monday represent small changes that would be made at several agencies that won't impact every resident of New York but are intended to make a difference for the people the current regulations affect. The two that Governor Hochul mentioned specifically are examples of that effort. Healthcare workers often have to fill out multiple forms with the same information when treating patients who have Medicaid as their health insurance. The new action would replace dozens of repetitive forms required with a single standard and allow for providers to sign them digitally. That's intended to free up more time for patient care.

The second change the Governor highlighted would simplify the state's renewal application process for occupational workers, like barbers, real estate agents and security guards, whose licenses expire every few years. Others are more specific, including a change that would allow adult care facilities to use telehealth for routine appointments after an initial in-person visit. That would enable elderly residents to avoid traveling for routine checkups.

One action being sought by the state is a remnant of the coronavirus pandemic. New York will seek to rescind a requirement that all staff at facilities managed by the state Office of Mental Health be vaccinated against the virus. Another would create more flexible standards for "kinship" foster homes, where a relative cares for a child.

There are also several regulations intended to reduce costs, including one that would no longer require a \$25,000 bond to transport small manufactured homes; another that would simplify the process used to decide if a historic preservation review is necessary for affordable housing projects.

Some of them have no practical impact, including 15 labor regulations that are no longer in effect but remain on the books, causing confusion for companies that seek to comply with the state's mandates. That includes a regulation that used to require restaurants to get a special permit from the state to allow women to work after midnight.

The 50 actions announced Monday are largely the result of recommendations made by state agencies. More regulatory actions are expected as the state sorts through the thousands of suggestions received from the public since February.

Many of the actions involve changes to current regulations. That means they'll be subject to the state's regulatory process, which requires proposed rules to be published and made available for public comment. Only after those comments are taken into consideration can those changes be adopted. That process typically takes several months.

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

**To view the Governors press release please click [here](#)**

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

### **NYSDOH Proposed Regulations Updating Medicaid Processes Per EXPRESS NY**

The NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH) published the following proposed rulemakings ([see attached](#)) in the [June 17th State Register](#) to streamline Medicaid processes consistent with the Governor's [EXPRESS NY](#) initiative announced earlier this week:

- **Streamline Medicaid Paperwork and Reporting for Healthcare Providers:** The Department of Health regulations replace repetitive documentation and recordkeeping requirements in the Medicaid program with a single cross-referenced standard ([18 NYCRR § 504.3](#)). This relates to written orders for durable medical equipment, medical/surgical supplies, prosthetic or orthotic devices, or orthopedic footwear, case management services, foster care services, home health services, and audiology services/recommendations or prescriptions for hearing aid services and products.
- **Explicit Authorization for Electronic Orders and Forms:** The Department of Health regulations explicitly authorize provider use of electronic orders and forms, and require provider manuals and fee schedules to be made available free of charge on the Medicaid fiscal agent's website.

### **2026 New York State Legislative Primary Races To Watch**

There's no shortage of competitive state legislative races this primary season. While that's in part due to retirements and incumbents looking to move up the ladder, it's also due to the upcoming enforcement of a cap on legislators' outside income, leading some to prepare to leave public office in favor of continuing to work outside the legislature. Many of these competitive primary races are in New York City, but there are plenty throughout the state too. Below are some of the legislative primaries to watch according to a recent City & State Article ([linked here](#)).

#### **Senate District 12**

Queens neighborhoods of Sunnyside, Woodside, Maspeth and Ridgewood and parts of Astoria, Long Island City and Elmhurst

**Incumbent:** Michael Gianaris (retiring)

**Candidates:** Aber Kawas and Steven Raga

**What you need to know:** The New York City chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America is backing Aber Kawas, a Palestinian American organizer, over Assembly Member Steven Raga, who became the first Filipino American elected to the state Legislature in 2022, and who also happens to be a dues-paying member of the DSA but is not a Socialist in Office. As of mid-June, Raga had an edge in fundraising, with matching funds included.

### **Senate District 13**

Queens neighborhoods of Corona, Jackson Heights and East Elmhurst

**Incumbent:** Jessica Ramos

**Challenger:** Jessica González-Rojas

**What you need to know:** Incumbent state Senator Jessica Ramos endorsed Andrew Cuomo for New York City mayor last year as her own mayoral campaign sputtered. Ramos quickly drew a primary challenge from Assembly Member Jessica González-Rojas after that endorsement. Both candidates have qualified for the public matching funds program, but González-Rojas leads in fundraising overall.

### **Senate District 25**

Central Brooklyn neighborhoods of Fort Greene, Bedford-Stuyvesant and Brownsville

**Incumbent:** Jabari Brisport

**Challenger:** Marlon Rice

**What you need to know:** Senator Jabari Brisport is having to defend his seat from a more mainstream Democrat, Marlon Rice. Active in the district as the event director at the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corp. Rice is pounding the pavement, arguing he's the more locally focused candidate versus Brisport, who's more interested in pushing the socialist policy agenda. But the incumbent, a former teacher, has easily cruised to reelection twice before, including when he defeated two similarly anti-socialist challengers in 2022. As of mid-June, Brisport had a significant fundraising advantage over his challenger.

### **Senate District 27**

Manhattan neighborhoods of Chinatown, the Financial District, SoHo, the East Village, the West Village and the Lower East Side

**Incumbent:** Brian Kavanagh (retiring)

**Candidates:** Yuh-Line Niou and Grace Lee

**What you need to know:** It's a rematch in New York City's Chinatown as onetime Assembly contest rivals now compete for an overlapping state Senate district. While there is no incumbent, Assembly Member Grace Lee's status as a sitting elected official could give her a leg up, she did not have when she unsuccessfully challenged Yuh-Line Niou in 2020 for the seat she now holds. Lee also enjoys a significant fundraising edge, as well as more public matching funds so far.

### **Senate District 61**

Part of Buffalo and all of Tonawanda, Amherst and Grand Island

**Incumbent:** Jeremy Zellner

**Challenger:** Jonathan Rivera

**What you need to know:** The showdown between state Sen. Jeremy Zellner and Assembly Member Jonathan Rivera is coming to a head. The former political allies are now engaged in a fight over the state Senate seat previously held by now-Buffalo Mayor Sean Ryan.

Zellner raised eyebrows earlier this year when the Erie County Democratic Party chose him in the special election to replace Ryan. Zellner has chaired the organization for nearly 15 years. Zellner isn't the only party leader in the state Legislature, but it's much rarer for a chair to have their own name put forward during the party-controlled special election process. (Zellner technically recused himself from the nominating process). Rivera vied to be the party's pick earlier this year but decided to focus his attention on the primary race in June rather than try to run an independent special election campaign against Zellner in February.

### **Assembly District 32**

Queens neighborhoods of Jamaica and Rochdale Village

**Incumbent:** Vivian Cook (retiring)

**Candidates:** Nathaniel Hezekiah III, Latoya LeGrand, Tunisia Morrison, Queen Johnson, Mohammed Molla

**What you need to know:** When Assembly Member Vivian Cook announced she would not seek reelection, it opened up her seat for the first time in over three decades. Latoya LeGrand, a former staffer for Cook, became the first person who filed to run – before Cook officially announced her retirement – and has since picked up the support of the New York Working Families Party. But that doesn't mean LeGrand is the heir apparent for the seat.

Queens factions are split over who they want to succeed Cook. The Queens Democratic Party endorsed Nathaniel Hezekiah III, who serves as deputy chief of staff to party boss Rep. Greg Meeks. Queens Borough President Donovan Richards decided he'd do something different, and instead has backed Tunisia Morrison, a former chief of staff to Assembly Member Alicia Hyndman and his chief of staff's sister. Democratic socialist Queen Johnson and Mohammed Molla round out the candidates in a crowded race that promises plenty of internal political jockeying for the future of Southeast Queens.

### **Assembly District 38**

Queens neighborhoods of Richmond Hill, Glendale, Ozone Park, Ridgewood and Woodhaven

**Incumbent:** Jenifer Rajkumar

**Challenger:** David Orkin

**What you need to know:** Assembly Member Jenifer Rajkumar faces a challenge from NYC-DSA-backed candidate David Orkin, a staff attorney at influential immigrant advocacy group Make the Road New York.

### **Assembly District 54**

Brooklyn neighborhoods of Cypress Hills and Bushwick

**Incumbent:** Erik Dilan

**Challenger:** Christian Celeste Tate

**What you need to know:** NYC-DSA and the New York Working Families Party are backing anti-poverty activist Christian Celeste Tate's challenge to Assembly Member Erik Dilan, who has already beaten back two challenges from DSA members in previous cycles. As of mid-June, Dilan had a significant fundraising advantage.

### **Assembly District 56**

Brooklyn neighborhoods of Bedford-Stuyvesant and parts of Crown Heights

**Incumbent:** Stefani Zinerman

**Challenger:** Eon Huntley

**What you need to know:** NYC-DSA's Eon Huntley is taking another shot at unseating Assembly Member Stefani Zinerman, after falling short by less than 6 points in 2024.

### **Assembly District 59**

Brooklyn neighborhoods of Canarsie, Flatlands, Georgetown, Mill Basin, Marine Park, Bergen Beach and Gerritsen Beach

**Incumbent:** Jaime Williams

**Challenger:** Jibreel Jalloh

**What you need to know:** Assembly Member Jaime Williams is fighting to hold on to her southeast Brooklyn seat as she faces a challenge from community organizer Jibreel Jalloh.

### **Assembly District 65**

Lower Manhattan, including the Lower East Side, Chinatown and the Financial District

**Incumbent:** Grace Lee (running for state Senate)

**Candidates:** Jasmin Sanchez, Illapa Sairitupac, Mariama James, Wei-Li Tjong, Lilah Mejia, Jay Jacky Wong

**What you need to know:** In this crowded primary, Illapa Sairitupac has received the bulk of endorsements, including from NYC-DSA and politically powerful unions like the Hotel and Gaming Trades Council and 32BJ SEIU. He ran for the seat four years ago, losing by 14 points to current Assembly Member Grace Lee – whose run for state Senate has left the seat open. Meanwhile, Jasmin Sanchez has the support of Rep. Nydia Velázquez and Citizen Action of New York, Lilah Mejia just picked up an endorsement from New York City Council Member Harvey Epstein and Wei-Li Tjong is backed by state Sen. John Liu. And Jay Jacky Wong is well-connected in the Chinatown portion of

the district. Sairitupac is endorsed by the mayor's political home, NYC-DSA, and Sanchez worked with his former attorney and close ally, Ali Najmi, to avoid getting booted from the ballot due to a residency challenge.

### **Assembly District 66**

Manhattan neighborhoods of Greenwich Village, Tribeca and SoHo

**Incumbent:** Deborah Glick (retiring)

**Candidates:** Ryder Kessler, David Siffert, Benjamin Yee, Furhan Ahmad, Jeannine Kiely, Corinne Arnold

**What you need to know:** Ryder Kessler, co-founder and former executive director of pro-housing group Abundance New York, is running in part on his identity as a gay person. But when he declared himself the only gay candidate running to represent a queer district, it raised eyebrows given David Siffert, a civil rights lawyer, is nonbinary and would make history if elected.

Glick has decided to endorse neither of them, though. She instead has backed Jeannine Kiely, a district leader and a founder of Friends of Elizabeth Street Garden. Also, in the mix are state Democratic Committee member Ben Yee and Corinne Arnold, who runs an election services business.

### **Assembly District 68**

Manhattan neighborhoods of East Harlem, Randalls Island and parts of the Upper East Side and Central Harlem

**Incumbent:** Eddie Gibbs

**Challengers:** Diana Ayala, Tamika Mapp and William Smith

**What you need to know:** A handful of candidates are looking to unseat Assembly Member Eddie Gibbs in East Harlem, sensing a potential opening in wake of several controversies the East Harlem Democrat has found himself embroiled in in recent years.

Former New York City Council Member Diana Ayala, who served as deputy speaker for several years, has mounted a challenge against Gibbs. District leaders Tamika Mapp and William Smith, who previously challenged Gibbs in 2024, are also in the running.

### **Assembly District 69**

Manhattan's Upper West Side

**Incumbent:** Micah Lasher (running for Congress)

**Candidates:** Eli Northrup and Stephanie Ruskay

**What you need to know:** With Assembly Member Micah Lasher running for Congress, the race is on for his seat in Albany. Public defender Eli Northrup, who ran for the seat two years ago but lost to Lasher by 19 points, is making another attempt, with the support of the WFP and other progressive groups. His competition is Stephanie Ruskay, a rabbi and the associate dean of the Jewish Theological Seminary who has the support of much of the Upper West Side's political establishment, including New York City

Comptroller Mark Levine and Manhattan Borough President Brad Hoylman-Sigal.

### **Assembly District 70**

Central Harlem

**Incumbent:** Jordan Wright

**Challenger:** Conrad Blackburn

**What you need to know:** Assembly Member Jordan Wright was elected to the Assembly in 2024, taking over the seat once occupied by his father, Keith Wright, the leader of the Manhattan Democratic Party. He faces a strong challenge from Conrad Blackburn, a staff attorney at The Bronx Defenders who's running with the support of NYC-DSA and United Auto Workers Region 9A.

### **Assembly District 129**

Syracuse

**Incumbent:** William Magnarelli

**Challenger:** Maurice Brown

**What you need to know:** Assembly Member William Magnarelli is a longtime fixture of Albany who has represented Assembly District 129 in Central New York for nearly 30 years. And as chair of the Assembly Transportation Committee, it's easy for him to campaign on his recent focus on housing and securing downtown revitalization funds for the city of Syracuse. But Onondaga County Legislator Maurice Brown is making an appeal to further-left Syracuse voters, urging them to upend the status quo and unseat Magnarelli, the incumbent more than twice his age he has labeled as a threat to progress. Brown is running on issues like lowering utility costs and building protected bike lanes, and most differs from Magnarelli on taxing the wealthy to fund better infrastructure. But Brown is still the progressive underdog in this fight – taking on a sitting Assembly member who hasn't had an opponent in half of his elections.

### **Assembly District 149**

Town of Hamburg, and parts of Buffalo and Lackawanna

**Incumbent:** Jonathan Rivera (running for state Senate)

**Candidates:** Adam Bojak, Karen Hoak and Kevin Deese

**What you need to know:** Although there are three candidates running, the main battle serves as a proxy war between Jeremy Zellner and the Erie County Democrats, and the Riveras. On one side, the local Democratic organization has thrown its weight behind Karen Hoak, a former Hamburg Town Council member with a long track record in government. Alex Burgos, a young politico with ties to the local party machine, dropped out to back Hoak, and now may run for Jonathan Rivera's father's Buffalo Common Council seat.

Supported by Rivera on the other side is attorney Adam Bojak, a Democratic Socialist of America-endorsed candidate who recently gained the backing of Bernie Sanders. A third candidate, Hamburg resident Kevin Deese, has also thrown his hat in the ring, and will

be a wild card among the feuding factions.

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

Early voting for the primaries began June 13<sup>th</sup> and will run through June 21<sup>st</sup> with primary election day being June 23<sup>rd</sup> from 6am-9pm.

**To find your polling place please click [here](#).**

### **Helpful Links and Resources**

**[2026 RMS HMH End of Session Update](#)**

**[RMS Revenue and Tax Final Budget Table](#)**

**[RMS Health/Mental Hygiene Final Budget Table](#)**

**[FY 2027 Enacted Budget Financial Plan](#)**

**[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/>**