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RMS End of Week Update 9/25/2026

Photo Credit: AP News

Battling Governor Race Polls

This week Quinnipiac University released a poll that found Governor Kathy Hochul leading Republican Bruce Blakeman 58-39 putting her on track for the fourth-largest landslide by a New York gubernatorial candidate in the past 200 years.

It's by far the best poll for Hochul this year and certainly better than a Siena University survey also released this week that found her with a modest 9 point lead over the Nassau County executive.

The last time both pollsters released New York numbers on the same day was a few weeks before Hochul's last election in 2022. Siena found at the time that her lead over then-Rep. Lee Zeldin was quickly shrinking, having dropped from 17 to 11 points. The Q Poll painted a more dire picture for the governor. "We released a poll in mid-October showing that Hochul had a 4 point lead over Lee Zeldin," Quinnipiac spokesperson Mary Snow said. "And it went against the grain of other polls out there at the time."

Hochul wound up winning that race by about 6 points. Pollster vs. pollster results in prior elections have been mixed. Both Q and Siena nailed Andrew Cuomo's eventual 23 point margin of victory in October 2018 polls, though Siena's early November numbers that year found Cuomo's lead had shrunk to 13. An infamous Q Poll from September 2010 found Cuomo with a stunningly small 6 point lead over Buffalo firebrand Carl Paladino, while a Siena poll the next day found a much more predictive 57-24 Cuomo advantage. The biggest difference this time around is that Quinnipiac assumed a higher share of November's turnout will be in deep blue New York City.

The five boroughs accounted for 31 percent of the statewide turnout in 2022 and 34 percent in 2018. Siena's sample assumed 30 percent of this year's voters will come from there, while 38 percent of Quinnipiac's sample was from the city. Quinnipiac also does more to avoid undecided voters. "One tweak that we made after 2020 was an adjustment to the questions that we ask, so that we try to cut down on the number of people who say they don't know," Snow said.

Only 3 percent of the Q Poll's sample declined to weigh in on the Hochul-Blakeman race, while the comparable number was 9 percent in Siena's poll. And it appears as if a lot of the Quinnipiac respondents who might not have answered Siena's questions broke toward the incumbent: Siena has Hochul winning New York City 61-27 while Quinnipiac has her up 70-27; Siena had her up 57-34 among women while Quinnipiac found her lead at 63-34. Another notable difference between the methodologies that may account for the divergent results is that Quinnipiac's sample was based on asking respondents what party they affiliate with. Siena uses voter registration files.

"For a couple of years running, the New York Times/Siena Poll was ranked as the most accurate poll in America," Siena spokesperson Steve Greenberg said. "Siena has been polling New York state for nearly a quarter of a century, and we have shown that we get it right almost all of the time."

Republicans, for their part, believe both sets of numbers are far overstating Hochul's advantage. "Blakeman is closer in the polls I've seen than Lee Zeldin was at this moment in time four years ago," state Senate Republican Campaign Committee Chair George Borrello said. "As I travel around New York state, I have seen literally thousands of Bruce Blakeman signs. Yet I can count on one hand the number of Kathy Hochul signs I've seen, unless you count the ones that say 'Fire Hochul.'"

To view the full POLITICO article please click here.

Governor Hochul Announces Next Steps To Regulate Major AI Developers

Earlier this week Governor Hochul announced next steps to advance New York's nation-leading AI safety law, the Responsible AI Safety and Education (RAISE) Act.

Starting in November, New York will direct large frontier AI developers to register with the State and prepare for compliance with strict requirements on transparency, safety, and incident reporting as prescribed by the RAISE Act. Those strict standards require large frontier AI developers to report critical safety incidents within 72 hours. Beginning January 2027, AI companies will be required to comply with those strict standards and provide regular reporting to the state's new Office of Digital Innovation, Governance, Integrity and Trust (DIGIT) established within the New York State Department of Financial Services (DFS).

The Governor also emphasized that, in the coming months, she will be exploring ways to build on the RAISE Act as part of ongoing efforts to further strengthen New York's nation-leading AI safety laws and regulations.

Immediately after Governor Hochul signed the RAISE Act into law, she convened an all-of-government effort to swiftly and effectively implement the RAISE Act, including DFS, the Office of Information Technology Services, and the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services. She announced the appointment of Marc Gilman as New York's Deputy Director for the RAISE Act. In this role, he will support New York's ongoing implementation of that law. Gilman is the first full-time hire of the Governor's new Office of Digital Innovation, Governance, Integrity and Trust (DIGIT), announced in her State of the State earlier this year. In addition to DFS staff with expertise in technology regulation, cybersecurity, and AI already working on this implementation, additional full-time staff will be joining the DIGIT office in the coming weeks and months.

These actions come as the Trump Administration continues to ignore the issue of AI safety — taking no new action to regulate major AI companies despite increasing calls for alarm from whistleblowers and the developers themselves. As the UN General Assembly convenes in New York this week, Governor Hochul continues to call on federal and world leaders to finally take action on AI safety — just as New York has done.

"Donald Trump and Washington Republicans may be standing still as AI grows more unpredictable, but New York will not," Governor Hochul said. "When companies are building some of the most powerful technology in the world, people deserve to know what they're doing to keep it safe, and those companies should be held accountable when things go wrong. As this technology continues to evolve, I'll continue working on additional steps to protect New Yorkers."

New York's nation-leading RAISE Act requires large frontier AI developers to:

- Establish safety and transparency frameworks, which must be published on the developer's website;
- Report critical safety incidents to the DIGIT Office within 72 hours and, as required, to other government authorities;
- File quarterly assessments of catastrophic risks to the DIGIT Office, which may transmit them to other government authorities; and

- Register with DIGIT, file a disclosure statement at least every other year, starting January 1, 2027, and pay assessments.

The RAISE Act also permits the public to file suspected critical safety incident reports with the DIGIT Office which may transmit them to other governmental authorities as appropriate. The DIGIT Office will also produce an annual public report summarizing incident reports received, observations about frontier model safety, and any recommended changes to the RAISE Act.

To view the full press release please click here.

NYS Comptroller DiNapoli Announces Latest Fiscal Stress Scores for Local Governments

A total of 22 local governments in New York state were designated in fiscal stress for their local fiscal years ending (FYE) in 2025, down from 23 a year ago. However, the number of municipalities in the most severe category, significant fiscal stress, increased from four to six, according to a report released by State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli. These designations are based on the Comptroller's Fiscal Stress Monitoring System (FSMS) scores.

"Local governments are facing increased fiscal pressures due to a combination of the end of federal pandemic aid, higher inflation, rising operating costs and moderating sales tax revenue growth," DiNapoli said. "Local officials should be pragmatic when planning future budgets, and I encourage them to use the FSMS information and tools we provide to help them make prudent financial decisions."

DiNapoli launched FSMS in 2013 to evaluate fiscal stress for local governments, using objective scoring indicators based on year-end fund balance, operating deficits, cash-on-hand, short-term borrowing, and fixed costs. The system's fiscal stress scoring provides an early warning to local officials about fiscal issues and gives the public insight into their local governments' financial condition.

DiNapoli releases fiscal stress scores for municipalities, excluding New York City, twice a year. The scores announced today are for local governments operating on a calendar year basis for FYE 2025, covering all counties and towns, 44 cities and 13 villages. This round of scoring designated 15 local governments in fiscal stress, including eight cities, six towns and one village. In March, DiNapoli announced that seven villages with non-calendar fiscal years were designated in stress. School district scores were released in January.

For this release, the cities of Albany (Albany County), Dunkirk (Chautauqua), and Little Falls (Herkimer), as well as the Town of Kent (Putnam) and the Village of New Hempstead (Rockland), were designated in the highest-ranking category of "significant stress."

The City of Poughkeepsie (Dutchess) was designated in "moderate fiscal stress," along with the towns of Minden (Montgomery), North Greenbush (Rensselaer), and Ramapo (Rockland).

DiNapoli also released a report summarizing FYE 2025 fiscal stress scoring results for both calendar year and non-calendar year municipalities, including designations by class, FSMS indicator analysis, and issues of concern, among other things.

The report found that:

- The number of cities receiving a stress designation doubled to eight in FYE 2025 from 2024, while the number of towns and villages with a stress designation decreased from 19 to 14. For the fifth consecutive year, no counties received a fiscal stress designation.
- Of the 22 municipalities designated in fiscal stress in FYE 2025, 13 saw their FSMS score increase from the previous year. Nine of these entities had received no designation in 2024.
- Eight municipalities with a fiscal stress designation in FYE 2024 improved their score enough to receive no designation in 2025.
- A total of nine municipalities were designated in some level of fiscal stress in both FYE 2024 and 2025. Four of these nine entities (the cities of Albany, Poughkeepsie and Little Falls, and the Village of Coxsackie) have been designated in fiscal stress for four consecutive years.

The number of municipalities that did not file in time to receive a fiscal stress score more than doubled from FYE 2015 to 2023, when it reached an all-time high of 264. The number of FSMS non-filers has decreased since that peak, down to 225 in FYE 2025. The decline is particularly noticeable for cities, which improved the most in percentage terms, while towns improved the most in total numbers. This improvement in filing rates is due, in part, to recent initiatives by DiNapoli's office to increase local officials' awareness of and compliance with filing requirements.

Local governments that fail to file their financial reports are more likely to have poor fiscal practices than those that file in time and receive a score. Audits by DiNapoli's office have found these entities frequently have problems with records management, billing, financial management, and internal controls.

The cities of Elmira (Chemung), Glen Cove (Nassau), Johnstown (Fulton), and Schenectady (Schenectady) were designated as "susceptible to fiscal stress," along with the towns of Cortlandville (Cortland) and La Grange (Dutchess).

To view the full press release and reports please click here.

Governor Hochul And Attorney General James Announce Lawsuit Against Polymarket For Running Illegal Gambling Operation

Governor Kathy Hochul and New York Attorney General Letitia James this week announced a lawsuit against QCX LLC d/b/a Polymarket US (Polymarket) for running an illegal gambling operation in New York through its prediction market platform.

Polymarket launched in the United States in December 2025 as a service that allowed users to bet money on the outcome of sporting events, promising users "sports — followed by markets on everything." An investigation by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) found that Polymarket's prediction market is an illegal, unlicensed gambling operation that exposes New Yorkers — including those under the legal gambling age of 21 — to serious personal and financial risk. The lawsuit is seeking a court order stopping Polymarket from operating as an unlicensed gambling business and requiring the company to pay fines, forfeit all illegal gains and pay restitution to users.

"I will always stand up for New Yorkers when bad corporate actors prey on consumers and threaten tax dollars that fund schools and critical public services," Governor Hochul said. "By running an unlicensed gambling operation, Polymarket has done more than just knowingly violate state law, they have put New Yorkers at risk, especially those underage who are most vulnerable to problem gaming. Nobody is above the law in our state, and working with Attorney General James, we are fighting to protect New Yorkers and put this illegal operation to an end."

Attorney General Letitia James said, "Our gambling laws exist to protect New Yorkers, prevent the potential harms of problem gambling, and ensure funding for educational and public benefit programs. By skirting New York's laws, Polymarket is targeting the most vulnerable and depriving New York families of critical services and support. My office will never hesitate to take action to defend our laws and keep New Yorkers safe."

The lawsuit alleges that Polymarket's prediction markets meet the legal definition of gambling because the outcomes of the events on which its users are betting are uncertain and outside the control of the bettor or hinge on a game of chance. Despite this, Polymarket has failed to obtain a license from the New York State Gaming Commission, sidestepping its obligation to pay taxes like licensed casinos and mobile sports gambling platforms do. This tax revenue from gambling regulation funds public schools, sports programs for underserved youth and problem gambling education and treatment. Polymarket's prediction markets are also available to users between the ages of 18-20, even though New York law requires a person to be at least 21 years old to participate in mobile sports betting. Exposing young people to online gambling can have damaging effects on their mental and financial well-being. A recent study by the National Institute of Health found that early exposure to gambling increases the likelihood of depression, anxiety, mood swings and financial stress. Further, a study by the American Psychological

Association found that 32 percent of those with a gambling disorder experience suicidal ideation.

In the lawsuit, Attorney General James is asking the court to order Polymarket to forfeit all illegal gains, distribute restitution to consumers who were harmed, and pay fines equal to three times the gains the company made through its illegal actions.

To view the full press release please click here.

NYS DOL Proposed Rule Making Regarding Opioid Antagonists In The Workplace

The Proposed rules purpose is to, in coordination with the Commissioner of Health, set standards for the appropriate number of opioid antagonists for workplaces, how and where employers should make opioid antagonists available to employees in the workplace, employee training on opioid antagonist use, and the use of opioid antagonists as part of first aid or emergency treatment in the workplace. This proposed rule would apply to all employers that are covered by Labor Law section 27-f.

Definitions:
(1) Administrator. A trained or untrained person who administers an opioid antagonist.
(2) Commissioner. The Commissioner of the New York State Department of Labor or their duly authorized representative for the purposes of implementing this Subpart.
(3) Employer. Any person, corporation, limited liability company, or association employing any individual in any occupation, industry, trade, business, or service. The term "employer" shall not include the State or any political subdivision of the State, public authority, or other governmental agency or instrumentality thereof.
(4) Opioid Antagonist. Defined at Public Health Law section 3309(3)(a)(i). A drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration that, when administered, negates or neutralizes in whole or in part the pharmacological effects of an opioid in the body. The term "Opioid antagonist" shall only include naloxone and other medications that the New York State Department of Health has approved for this purpose.
(5) Workplace. Any location where an employer is required by 29 CFR 1910.151 to have first aid supplies readily available for the treatment of all injured employees (as incorporated by reference in section 800.3 of this Title; available online at federalregister.gov and at the offices of the New York State Department of State [One Commerce Plaza, 99 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12231]).

Section 27-1.2 – Employer Requirements for Opioid Antagonists in the Workplace

(a) Employer requirements for opioid antagonists in the workplace
(1) All employers within the scope of this Subpart must make a sufficient number of opioid antagonists available in their workplaces to enable an administrator to respond quickly to a suspected opioid overdose. Employers should consider at least the following

factors when determining how many opioid antagonists are sufficient for a particular workplace: (i) The size and physical layout of the workplace, including such characteristics as the number of floors in the workplace, the location of doorways, and any restrictions to access. (ii) The number of persons that work in or otherwise access the workplace for work-related purposes. (iii) Whether any populations that work in or otherwise access the workplace for authorized purposes are considered, by either the employer or a regulator, a population at high risk for opioid overdose. (iv) Whether the nature of the work conducted at the workplace is such that there is a higher-than-average risk of a suspected opioid overdose occurring on-site. (v) Whether any suspected opioid overdoses have previously occurred on-site, and if so, how many, how recently, and with what frequency they occurred. (2) Employers must locate opioid antagonists in easily accessible areas and administrators generally should not have to travel through several doorways, hallways, and/or stairways to access the opioid antagonists. Employers should consider at least the following factors when deciding where to locate opioid antagonists in a particular workplace: (i) The location of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) and/or other first aid supplies in the workplace. (ii) The size and physical layout of the workplace, including such characteristics as the number of floors in the workplace and the location of doorways and any restrictions to access. (iii) The centrality of a location for opioid antagonists and whether an administrator could quickly access that location when responding to a suspected opioid overdose. (v) The degree to which a location for opioid antagonists is conspicuous and whether an administrator could quickly identify that location when responding to a suspected opioid overdose. (vi) The degree to which a potential location for opioid antagonists is protected such that the opioid antagonists could not easily be tampered with, accidentally damaged, unintentionally removed, or stolen. (vii) The presence of security features that could limit access or restrict the freedom of movement of administrators when responding to a suspected opioid overdose. (3) Opioid antagonists should not be located in locked rooms or where access is restricted, unless they are meant to be an additional supply or are secondary to the opioid antagonists provided for primary access. (i) However, an employer may, if they have a reasonable security or safety-based concern, locate the opioid antagonists in a locked room or where access is restricted. (ii) If the employer decides to locate the opioid antagonist in a locked room or where access is restricted, they must take all available measures to otherwise ensure that the opioid antagonists are easily accessible to administrators and that administrators are able to quickly access the opioid antagonists when responding to a suspected opioid overdose. (4) Employers must effectively communicate the location(s) of any opioid antagonists in the workplace to employees, such that administrators are sufficiently aware of such location(s) to respond quickly to a suspected opioid overdose. (5) The opioid antagonists must be sealed in the manufacturer's original packaging and be stored with any instructions provided by the manufacturer. If the manufacturer did not provide any instructions, or the instructions have been lost or otherwise removed from the opioid antagonist's storage location, then the opioid antagonists must be stored with instructions provided by any of the following sources: (i) The New York State Department of Health. (ii) The New York City

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. (iii) The New York State's Drug User Health Training Center of Expertise. (6) In the event that a workplace is shared between more than one employer, those employers may jointly fulfill all the requirements of this Subpart, and, if they decide to do so, they must memorialize their plan for joint fulfillment of all the requirements of this Subpart, to be made available upon request by the commissioner.

Section 27-1.3 – Training Requirements for Opioid Antagonists in the Workplace

(a) Training requirements for opioid antagonists in the workplace.

(1) Employers should endeavor to recruit employee volunteers to become trained in the administration of opioid antagonists and may choose to ensure that all employees become trained. However, employers must ensure that there is always at least one employee in the workplace during business hours that has completed training in the administration of opioid antagonists. (2) Training to administer opioid antagonists must be consistent with materials made available by a department of health in New York State and should include at least the following topics: (i) how to recognize the symptoms of an opioid overdose; (ii) how to administer an opioid antagonist; (iii) what steps to take prior to and after the administration of an opioid antagonist, including contacting first responders; and (iv) how the Good Samaritan protections provided in Public Health Law section 3000-a relate to the administration of opioid antagonists.

Section 27-1.4 – Opioid Antagonist Use in the Workplace

(a) Opioid antagonist use in the workplace.

(1) Opioid antagonists shall be used according to the manufacturer's instructions, with due attention provided to expiration dates. (2) Employers must regularly inspect the supply of opioid antagonists in their workplaces to ensure that the opioid antagonists are not expired, tampered with, removed, or otherwise missing from their locations. (3) Employers must replace any expired, tampered with, removed, or otherwise missing opioid antagonists as soon as they become aware, or should have become aware, of the need to replace opioid antagonists. (4) Employers must properly dispose of any expired or used opioid antagonists. (5) After an opioid antagonist is used, it should be replaced as soon as possible. (6) Administering an opioid antagonist pursuant to this Subpart shall be considered first aid or emergency treatment for purposes of Public Health Law section 3000-a.

To view the full proposed rule in the Register please go to Page 9 here.
Public comment will be received until: 60 days after publication of this notice and can be sent to:

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1200 Washington Ave., Building 12, Suite 509,
(518) 485-2191,
email: regulations@labor.ny.gov

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/