



PAC State and Local Government Relations Conference New York State - Deep Dive

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Mini Bio

Professional Experience

- Wells Fargo & Company – New York, NY | January 2018 – Present
- Previous
 - Airbnb, Inc. – New York, NY
 - CSAA Insurance Group – Walnut Creek, CA and Hamilton, NJ
 - Baker & Hostetler LLP – New York, NY

Education

- JD, Harvard Law School
- Master of Public Policy, University of Michigan
- Bachelor of Arts (Political Science), University of Michigan

What comes to mind when you think of New York?

Empire State/Big Apple

Statue of Liberty

Banking and media capital

New York Yankees

**State and local government relations
capital**

New York State Quick Facts

- Population: 19.54 million¹
- Capital: Albany
- Legislative session: Legislators are typically only in Albany from January to June, but sessions last two years and feature bill carryover
- Legislature structure: Assembly (150 members) and Senate (63 members)²
- Partisan control: Democrats currently hold majorities in the Assembly and Senate
- Governor: Andrew Cuomo (D)
- Lt. Governor: Kathy Hochul (D)
- Assembly Speaker: Carl Heastie (D)
- Senate Majority Leader: Andrea Stewart Cousins (D)
- Legislative terms: 2 years for Assembly and Senate³



¹Source: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/NY>

²Source: <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/> and <https://www.nysenate.gov/senators-committees>

³Source: New York State Constitution. Article III, Section 2

Navigating New York's Legislative Process

Navigating New York's Legislative Process

Getting bills passed is a major challenge.

Generally speaking, it is remarkably difficult to get bills passed in New York. Even broadly supported legislation with non-controversial subject matter can take many years to reach the governor's desk. This is largely attributable to three key factors:

- Simple Math
 - New York has far more bills introduced in each session than most other states¹
 - E.g., One source found that for the 2011-2012 session, 18,000+ were introduced²
- Short session
 - Session is only January to June, and legislators mainly work on bills from *April* to June
- Leadership constraints
 - Legislative leaders won't bring a bill up for vote unless they know it will pass

¹Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/new-york-politicians-write-more-laws-than-anyone-else-and-late-nights-lead-to-mistakes-11561546800>

²Source: <https://www.billtrack50.com/blog/eye-candy/comparing-state-legislatures-by-counting-bills/>

Navigating New York's Legislative Process (contd.)

Other Quirks

New York's legislative process features several quirks that practitioners should bear in mind as they work bills. These quirks compound the overarching difficulties previously mentioned.

- Rules Committee
 - Once a bill passes committee and heads back into the Assembly or Senate, it gets a number of “rules” attached to it.
 - The rules are instructions for how legislators can debate a bill, and they can grease the wheels or stifle its progress.
- Limited Transparency
 - Usually you must be invited by the committee to testify on a bill.
 - Most bills in New York never receive a public hearing at all.
- Committees can't force votes
 - Committees lack the power to ensure legislation they have passed receives a vote in the full chamber. Unless leadership schedules a debate and vote, the bill dies in limbo.

Navigating New York's Legislative Process (contd.)

Looking for a silver bullet? Try the budget.

New York practitioners can bypass the complexities of the legislature altogether by lobbying the Governor's Office and enacting laws through the budget process.

- The Governor must introduce the budget into the legislature by February 1.
- The Assembly Speaker, Senate Majority Leader, and the Governor negotiate to finalize the budget, which must be passed by both chambers before April 1.
 - Assembly and Senate create their own legislative proposals by proposing modifications to the Governor's Budget.
- Legislating through the budget is common
 - Important policy changes often occur via the budget process, not separate legislation.

Key New York Developments in 2019

Key New York Legislative Developments in 2019

Below is a sampling of the most notable bills that passed the New York State legislature this year. All were signed by Governor Cuomo.

- Strengthened anti-sexual harassment law – [NY A8421/S6577](#)
- Expanded data breach notification – [NY A5635B/S5575B](#)
- Pay Equity – [NY A8093A/S5248B](#)
- Salary History Inquiry – [NY A5308B/S6549](#)
- Campaign Finance Disclosures for LLCs – [NY A776/S1101](#)

Looking Ahead to 2020

Looking Ahead to 2020

Below is a list of notable bills which FAILED to pass the legislature this year. These bills could gather momentum and merit attention in 2020.

- New York Privacy Act – [NY S5642](#)
 - This bill initially looked poised to gain momentum, but ultimately stalled. It would impose multiple safeguards for consumer data privacy. Experts consider its scope broader than California’s landmark data privacy law.
- Recreational marijuana
 - Although New York did enact a new law to reduce penalties for possession of marijuana ([A8420/S6579A](#)), wholesale legalization of recreational use remained elusive, as legislators ran out of time. Look for this issue to return in 2020.
- Single-payer health care
 - A perennial topic of discussion in New York, this bill failed to make headway in 2019, but could re-emerge in 2020 as the federal health care law landscape continues to shift.

Looking Ahead to 2020 (contd.)

Important Dates

- Legislature returns: January 8, 2020 (roughly)
- Primary filing deadline: April 2, 2020
- Statewide primary: June 23, 2020
- General election: November 3, 2020

Who is up for re-election?

- Assembly
- Senate

New York City – A Very Brief Primer

New York City Quick Facts

- Population: 8.39 million¹
- Government structure: five boroughs (Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Bronx, and Staten Island), each with its own elected borough president + NYC City Council + Mayor
- New York City Council
 - 51 members across 51 districts
 - 4-year terms with a two-term limit
 - Current Speaker: Corey Johnson
- New York City Mayor
 - Current mayor: Bill de Blasio
 - 4-year terms with a two-term limit
- New York City Public Advocate
 - Influential citywide elected position; first in line to succeed the mayor; acts as watchdog
 - Current officeholder: Jumaane Williams
- New York City Comptroller
 - Influential citywide elected position; responsible for overseeing the City's finances
 - Current officeholder: Scott Stringer

¹ Source: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/newyorkcitynewyork>

Recent New York City Developments and Looking Ahead

Key New York City Developments in 2019

- Right to disconnect bill ([Int. No. 726-2018](#))
- Mandated paid vacation ([Int. No. 800-A-2018](#))
- Commercial rent control ([Int. No. 737-2018](#))

On the Horizon for 2020

- No major city elections, but with Mayor de Blasio, Comptroller Stringer, all five Borough Presidents, and nearly 40 of the 51 Council Members exiting office in 2021 because of term limits, many elected officials will aim to position themselves as frontrunners for the 2021 municipal election.

Wrap-up and Key Takeaways

Key Things to Remember

- Getting bills passed in Albany is very difficult. Advise your business partners of this reality, and plan for the time, expense, and strategy of getting things done.
- If possible, try to get bills passed through the governor's budget, so you avoid the complexities of the regular legislative process
- Transparency in the lawmaking process is limited in Albany. Don't expect public hearings on the bills of concern to you. Use other avenues to influence legislative outcomes.
- New York City has a large, complex government with a unique structure. Take care to learn and understand the stakeholders and political dynamics – even at the neighborhood level. Parachuting in from elsewhere and trying to achieve immediate outcomes rarely works.
- Although generally welcoming to outsiders, New York is provincial and – both in Albany and NYC – reluctant to take cues from other states or cities. As such, it is important to invest in cultivating a government relations presence there over an extended period of time.



Thank you

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