

Week of April 10
Report on Approved State Budget for 2017-18:
Important Provisions Included, Notably Raising the Age of Criminal Responsibility

Suffice it to say that the last two weeks in Albany have felt like a rollercoaster ride with lots of highs, lows, twists and turns, including the Legislature's passage of a two-month extension of the current budget to avert a government shutdown and assure state employees would be paid while negotiations continued past the April 1 deadline. Ultimately, the logjam on a handful of issues that had been the lynchpin for reaching an agreement on a budget for fiscal years 2017-18, ranging from raising the age of criminal responsibility to education aid to charter school funding, broke on Friday, April 7, 2017 with the Governor announcing he had reached an agreement with Legislative Leaders on the outstanding issues, paving the way for the Legislature to adopt a \$153.1 billion (all funds) budget over the weekend. State Operating Funds spending rises by 2 percent to \$98.1 billion (excluding Federal Funds and capital).

The enacted budget contains a number of important policy and programmatic changes as well, including raising the age of criminal responsibility, raise for direct care workers and clinical staff, workers' compensation reforms, and contingency plan should New York see a reduction in federal aid. A brief report on the approved budget, focusing on the elements of pertinent interest follows.

I. RAISING THE AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY ADOPTED AS PART OF 2017-18 STATE BUDGET

The approved budget includes a plan to raise the age of criminal responsibility in New York State from 16 years of age to 18 years of age in phases: first to 17 on October 1, 2018, and to 18 on October 1, 2019.

16 and 17 year olds would be adjudicated as follows:

- Civil violation charges would continue to be handled in the local court, including open container violations and possession of small amounts of marijuana, as well as misdemeanors under the Vehicle and Traffic Law, such as DWIs.
- All misdemeanor charges under the Penal Law would be handled in Family Court.
- All felony charges would begin in a newly established Youth Part of the criminal court, presided over by a Family Court judge, where offenders would have access to additional intervention services and programming. Judges in the Youth Part will receive training in juvenile justice, adolescent development as well as "effective treatment methods for reducing unlawful conduct by youths."
- Non-violent felony charges would be transferred to Family Court, unless the district attorney makes a motion and demonstrates extraordinary circumstances that justify retaining the case in the Youth Part of the criminal court.
- Violent felony charges would remain in the Youth Part of the criminal court and be subject to a three-part test that weighs the seriousness of the offense to determine whether the case will be eligible for presumptive removal to Family Court.
- Juvenile cases not eligible for removal will be treated as adults for sentencing purposes, though the court will be directed to consider the defendant's age when imposing a sentence of incarceration.

Other elements of the new law:

Confinement:

- The law establishes a timeline for youth to be removed from county jails as follows: October 1, 2018 for youth under the age of 17; and, October 1, 2019 for youth under the age of 18.
- If the detention of the youth is necessary, confinement will take place at detention facility that is operated and regulated by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS).
- Youth convicted in the Youth Part and sentenced to state prison will be housed in adolescent offender facility operated by the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision with programming provided by OCFS. Further clarification is being sought regarding the shared responsibility of DOCCS and OCFS.

- **Sealing of Records:** Recognizing the damage a record of conviction can have on future opportunities for employment, higher education and housing, individuals who have been convicted of a non-violent offense will be able to apply to the court to have their record sealed following a 10-year waiting period after the completion of their sentence.
- **Raise the Age Implementation Task Force:** Appointed by the Governor, the duties of the task force include: (a) monitoring state’s implementation of raise the age law; (b) evaluating adherence; and, (c) reviewing of provisions regarding the sealing of records and effectiveness of such. The initial report of the task force is due on or before August 1, 2019.
- **Funding:**
 - \$110 million in capital projects funding for OCFS to upgrade/renovate/redesign facilities and develop capacity
 - Opportunity for counties to apply for funding to the State upon a demonstration of financial hardship pursuant to an application to be submitted to the Division of the Budget
 - Funding for probation departments to establish and provide “a continuum of evidenced-based intervention services for youth” adjudicated under the Family Court Act or in accordance with the provisions governing the Youth Part

Governor Cuomo signed the revenue budget bill into law as Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2017, which includes the raise the age provisions, at an event in New York City, on Monday, April 10, 2017. We have provided links to articles recently published on the issue.

II. HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE ARTICLE VII BILL HIGHLIGHTS

The approved budget includes the following:

- **Director Care Workers & Clinical Staff** – Raise for direct care workers and direct support professionals working at state-funded programs: 3.25 percent on January 1, 2018, and another 3.25 percent on April 1, 2018 (total of 6.5 percent). Clinical staff at state-funded programs would receive a 3.25 percent raise starting on April 1, 2018.
- **Prescription Drug Costs** – The Governor’s plan to combat the rising cost of prescription drug costs was scaled back significantly in the approved budget. Ultimately, the budget only targets the Medicaid program, establishing a cap and annual growth limit for pharmaceuticals. In certain instances, the Commissioner of Health would identify and refer drugs to the Drug Utilization Review Board to make a recommendation as to whether or not a manufacturer should provide a targeted “supplemental rebate” to the Medicaid program and empowers the Commissioner to Health to take certain action if a manufacturer does not agree to provide such rebate.
- **Inappropriate Prescribing of Opioids** – Definition of what is considered an unacceptable practice in the Medicaid program is expanded to include the inappropriate prescribing of opioids, going beyond statutory limits, which could result in the prescriber’s exclusion from the program. The provision further specifies that a provider’s due process rights otherwise required under law or regulation must be adhered to before exclusion can occur.

The approved budget does not include the following as originally proposed by the Governor in his Executive budget request:

- Establishment of the **Health Care Regulation Modernization Team** along with the authority for Commissioners of the Department of Health, Office of Mental Health, and Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services to expand scopes of practice through “demonstration programs” that are not otherwise permitted under current law or regulations.
- Authorization for pharmacists to adjust the drug strength, frequency or route of administration, the discontinuation of a medication as well as the authority to initiate medication that differs from that initially prescribed by the patient’s physician as part of comprehensive medication management services for patients with chronic disease or diseases.
- Elimination of prescriber prevails in Medicaid Fee for Service and Medicaid Managed Care for all drug classes. The Governor’s proposal would have only provided an exception for atypical anti-psychotics and anti-depressant medications. This means the status quo remains.
- Medicaid Transportation related proposals to: (1) carve out the transportation services from the Medicaid Managed Long-Term Care benefit and moving it into fee-for-service; (2) eliminate supplemental payments to rural transportation networks; and, (3) eliminate supplemental payments to emergency medical transportation providers.

- Requirement for pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) to register and be licensed by the Department of Financial Services (DFS).
- Authority for DFS to order an insurer into administrative supervision proceedings in cases where the insurer has become insolvent.
- Authority for the Office of Mental Health to permit the establishment of jail-based restoration-to-competency programs within locally-operated jails and State prisons operated by the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision.

III. APPROPRIATIONS OF NOTE

The approved budget *includes* the following:

Youth Employment Related Appropriations

- \$300,000 in new financial support for YouthBuild programs located in New York State, while also re-appropriating a total of \$500,000 from appropriations allocated in previous years.

Education Related Appropriations

- **Education Aid:** Approved budget increases aid by \$1.1 billion, which includes a \$700 million increase in Foundation Aid for a total of \$25.8 billion, a 4.4 percent increase compared to last year.
- **Primary Mental Health Project** – Two separate re-appropriations for the services and expenses of the primary mental health project at the children’s institute: \$894,000 for the 2016-17 school year and \$127,000 for the 2015-16 school year.
- **Creation and Printing of Standardized Assessment Forms** – Approved budget appropriates \$8.4 million in the 2017-18 budget to allow for the creation and printing of state standardized assessments with the goal of releasing a “significant amount of test questions” based on a plan to be developed by the Commissioner of Education and approved by the Director of the Budget.
- **Advanced Placement Tests** – Approved budget includes \$2 million to assist 68,000 low-income students in affording the cost of these exams, an increase of \$1.5 million from the \$500,000 appropriation in the 2016-17 state budget. The funds would be distributed according to a plan developed by the Commissioner of Education, which must be approved by the Director of the Budget. In addition, the funds would only be available as a “... a state match to federal title IV funds pursuant to the elementary and secondary education act or other sources of federal or local funding.”
- **Cyberbullying** – Approved budget includes a \$300,000 appropriation for the State Education Department to develop an initiative to prevent cyberbullying in consultation with the Commissioners of the Office of Mental Health and Office of Children and Family Services.

Mental Health & Substance Use Disorders Related Appropriations

- **Funding for NASW-NYS’ Veterans Mental Health Training Initiative** – Re-appropriation of \$450,000 or \$150,000 per organization for the National Association of Social Workers – New York State, the New York State Psychiatric Association, and the Medical Society of the State of New York to continue the Veterans Mental Health Training Initiative.
- **Federal Funding to DFS** – \$1.4 million federal grant DFS received to enhance its activities with respect to mental health and substance use disorder parity enforcement and compliance.
- **Funding for Crisis Intervention Teams** – \$1.4 million appropriated for crisis intervention teams and diversion services, an effort that is aimed in part at expanding the number of law enforcement and first responders trained on interacting with and responding to individuals in crisis.
- **Reinvestment in Community-Based Services** – As much as \$11 million (annualized) for OMH to invest in community-based services to offset the reduction of inpatient beds with \$110,000 to be re-invested per bed closed.
- \$200 million in funding to continue the fight against heroin and opioid epidemic aimed at a number of initiatives to support prevention, treatment and recovery. While this funding is appropriated, the Governor’s proposal to establish two recovery high schools, was not included in the approved budget.

Housing Related Appropriations

- **Affordable Housing** – \$2.5 billion to provide for establishment of 6,000 supportive housing units and 100,000 units of affordable housing.

Environmental Related Appropriations

- \$2.5 billion for Clean Water Infrastructure Act, \$500 million increase compared to the Governor’s original proposal. The Assembly provides a breakdown for how the money will be spent: <http://nyassembly.gov/Press/20170407/>.
- \$300 Million for Environmental Protection Fund
- \$140,000 for the New York State Pipe Traders Industry United Association, for the purposes of establishing four solar thermal technology training programs, located in Rochester, Buffalo, Southern Tier and Long Island.

IV. EDUCATION, LABOR & FAMILY ASSISTANCE/REVENUE ARTICLE VII BILL HIGHLIGHTS

The approved budget *includes* the following:

- **Excelsior Scholarship Program (Tuition-Free College at SUNY and CUNY)** – Approved budget includes a modified version of the Governor’s proposal to provide tuition-free college at SUNY and CUNY schools for students from income eligible families. Students from families making under \$125,000 would qualify for the Excelsior Scholarship Program. The program would be phased in over three years, providing eligibility to students from families making \$100,000 in fall of 2017, \$110,000 in 2018 and \$125,000 in 2019. In order to be eligible, students must be enrolled in college full-time and will be required to live and work in New York for the number of years they received the scholarship assistance. Division of Budget Director projects 22,000 students will be benefit from the program this fall with the \$100,000 income threshold.
- **Maintenance of Effort Plan for SUNY and CUNY** – Approved budget authorizes SUNY and CUNY schools to raise the undergraduate resident tuition by no more than \$200 year for the next four years.
- **Enhanced Tuition Awards for Students at Private and Independent Colleges**
 - The approved budget establishes the Enhanced Tuition Award, which will provide a maximum of \$3,000 to income-eligible students at private and independent colleges through TAP, with the proviso the institution must match the award and freeze the tuition rate for the duration of the award. The approved budget appropriates \$19 million for the program. The program will be phased in as follows: for students from families earning \$100,000 or less in 2017-18 academic year; (b) for students from families earning \$110,000 or less in the 2018-19 academic year; and (c) for students from families earning \$125,000 or less in the 2019-20 academic year. Of note, students would be required to take full-course load (at least 12 credits per semester), maintain a GPA necessary to successfully complete coursework, and similar to the Excelsior Program, live and work in New York for a “continuous number of years equal to the duration of the award.” Colleges have the option of not participating in the program.
- **Extension of State Statutes Regarding No Child Left Behind Act of 2001** – Approved extends the expiration of several statues conforming to the requirement of the No Child Left Behind Act, removing the name of the Act and replacing it with Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.
- **Notice to Students Regarding Specialized High Schools** – While the Governor originally proposed the New York City Chancellor of Education be required to provide a notice in the official score report for all students receiving a score of “advanced” on the *eighth grade* assessments for English Language Arts or Mathematics regarding the opportunity to apply for admission to a specialized high school, the approved budget modified the provision to require such notice be provided to all students in *seventh grade*.

Action on several other education-related proposals put forth by the Governor in his Executive budget request:

- **Protections for students under the Human Rights Law** – Approved budget does not extend the Human Rights Law to students attending public schools, which the courts have ruled currently only applies to private school students.

- **Identification of Pupils for Participation in Gifted Programs** – Approved budget does not remove the process by which parents, teachers or administrators can refer a student to a gifted program.
- **Waiver from Certain Special Education Requirements** – Approved budget does not include proposal to allow a school district, approved private school or a BOCES program to apply for a waiver from certain special education requirements.
- **DREAM Act** – Approved budget does not include Governor’s proposal would allow for undocumented students, who meet certain conditions, to access the Tuition Assistance Program and State-administered scholarships

V. HIGHLIGHTS OF TRANSPORTATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION ARTICLE VII LEGISLATION

- Approved budget *includes* special assessment on gas and electric corporations, which is not to exceed \$19.7 million and will be used to fund activities of New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, the Department of Environmental Conservation’s climate change initiatives and the Department of Agriculture and Markets’ Fuel New York program. This special assessment is in addition to the assessment authorized under Section 18-a of the Public Service Law and has been enacted annually, most recently as part of the budget for the last fiscal year.
- Approved budget *includes* provisions to allow the Departments of Agriculture and Markets, State, Environmental Conservation and Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to fund utility oversight costs with the revenue received from the assessment placed on public utilities pursuant to the Public Service Law. The enacted provisions also allow the expenses of the Department of Health’s public health programs and initiatives to be covered under an assessment placed on cable television companies.
- Approved budget *does not include* Governor’s proposal to remove the chair of the New York Athletic Commission from the list of salaried officers pursuant to New York’s Executive Law, which would have eliminated the salary requirement for the position under the rationale it provides greater flexibility to determine the compensation package for the position.
- Approved budget *does not include* Governor’s proposal to require high volume generators of food waste, including manufacturers, supermarkets, restaurants, institutions for higher education, and health care facilities to donate excess edible food to food banks, animal feed operations, anaerobic digesters or to other composting and organics recycling facilities.

VI. WORKERS’ COMPENSATION REFORMS

A number of workers’ compensation reforms were adopted as part of the 2017-18 budget, including:

- **Prescription Drug Formulary** – Establishment of a formulary by December 31, 2017, including “... a tiered list of high-quality, cost-effective medications that are pre-approved to be prescribed and dispensed, as well as additional non-preferred drugs that can be prescribed with prior approval.” The provisions require the Worker’ Compensation Board to promulgate regulations establishing a process for the medical director of the board to receive requests to change the formulary, including requests to change the status of a drug from non-preferred to preferred.

VII. PLAN FOR RESPONDING TO CHANGES IN FEDERAL FUNDING

While the approved budget does not include the unilateral authority initially sought by the Governor to make changes in the budget in the event of a reduction in federal aid, it establishes a contingency plan as follows:

- If the federal government reduces aid for Medicaid or any other area of the budget by \$850 million or more, the Division of the Budget (DOB) will prepare a Financial Response Plan consisting of spending reductions.
- The Legislature will have 90 days to pass an alternative plan, otherwise the plan put forth by the DOB will take effect.

VIII. BUDGET ACTION ON GOVERNOR’S SIGNATURE PRIORITIES

Also included in the approved budget:

- Taxes – Two year extension of the millionaires tax, keeping the top rate of 8.82 percent for individuals making more than \$1 million or couples making more than \$2 million a year, which is expected to impact 45,000 taxpayers.
- Middle Class Tax Cuts – Budget continues the reduction in tax rates for those making under \$300,000. For those earning between \$40,000 and \$150,000 the rate is reduced to 6.45 percent from 6.85 percent in 2018. For those earning between \$150,000 and \$300,000, the rate is reduced to 6.65 percent from 6.85 percent for 2018.
- Transportation Networking Companies – Ridesharing companies, such as Uber and Lyft, will be authorized operate in upstate New York as early as July 10, 2017, pursuant to regulations to be promulgated by the Department of Motor Vehicles.

IX. ETHICS REFORM

- The approved budget does not include the myriad of ethics reforms the Governor had proposed ranging from limiting the outside income for legislators, creating a full-time legislature, establishing term limits for legislators, and campaign finance reforms.

X. OTHER RECENT EDUCATIONAL NEWS

A. Board of Regents Elections

The Legislature recently convened in special session to elect three regents:

- **6th Judicial District:** Susan Mittler, a retired kindergarten teacher from Ithaca and former president of the Ithaca Teachers Association, defeated Joseph Greenfield with 109 votes to become the regent for the 6th Judicial District, covering most of the Southern Tier.
- **7th Judicial District:** Incumbent and current vice chancellor of the Board of Regents, T. Andrew Brown was elected to serve another five year term, receiving 117 votes in favor, defeating challenger Ellen Prusinowski, a retired teacher. The 7th Judicial District includes the following counties: Cayuga, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, and Yates.
- **1st Judicial District:** Incumbent Nan Mead cruised to another term with 145 votes in favor and no opposition. The 1st Judicial District covers Manhattan. (Link enclosed)

B. OPT-OUT MOVEMENT

- *Newsday* reports more than 67,000 students on Long Island opted-out of taking the state’s English Language Arts exam. (Link enclosed)
- In the Capital Region, covering Albany, Schenectady, Saratoga, and Rensselaer counties, the *Times Union* reports more than seventy percent of schools districts reported fewer students opting out. The Menands and Hoosick Falls school districts reported an increase in the number of students opting out of the English Language Arts exam. Meanwhile, the *Times Union* survey found that some districts have seen their opt our rates remain stubbornly high reporting, “Some districts continue to see a large number of students refusing the tests, even as those numbers shrink. These include Brunswick-Brittonkill in Rensselaer County, where 50 percent of students refused to take the exams; Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk in Albany County, where 39 percent refused; and Waterford-Halfmoon in Saratoga County, where 32 percent refused.” (Link enclosed)

C. NYSUT Elections

- Andrew Pallotta, a former elementary school teacher, has been elected to serve as the next president of The New York State United Teachers Union, a 600,000 member organization. Mr. Pallotta has been active with the union most recently serving as executive vice president. (Link enclosed)

XI. FEDERAL NEWS

- **YouthBuild:** Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney (D-Cold Spring), representative for the 18th Congressional District covering Putnam and Orange counties as well as sections of Westchester and Dutchess counties, visited the New

Directions Youth Build/AmeriCorps Program in Poughkeepsie on Monday, April 3, 2017, using the opportunity to urge President Trump to preserve funding for YouthBuild and AmeriCorps. President Trump's budget would reduce funding for these programs nationwide by \$35 million. This particular YouthBuild program offered by Nubian Directions provides job training and an array of services to individuals between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four years old who are not in school. (Links enclosed)

- **Kalief Browder Re-Entry Success Act:** Congressman Joe Crowley (D-Bronx and Queens), representative for the 14th Congressional District includes sections of the Bronx and Queens, announced the introduction of legislation he is sponsoring this week known as the Kalief Browder Re-Entry Success Act. The bill is an effort to improve mental health services for individuals recently released from jail or prison. Under the bill, the Attorney General and Director of the National Institute of Health would establish demonstration programs to have the mental health of inmates assessed before leaving jail or prison to assure for continuity of care, inviting state and local departments of correction along with agencies providing mental health and social services to submit proposals for demonstrations programs, which could be awarded a grant for implementation. (Link enclosed)

Press Clips

Education

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<http://buffalonews.com/2017/04/11/tuition-free-scholarship-benefit-32000-suny-students/>

“New York's Free-Tuition Program Will Help Traditional, but Not Typical, Students,” *New York Times*, April 11, 2017

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“Free SUNY tuition plan could alter New York's higher-ed landscape,” *The Buffalo News*, April 10, 2017

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“Delegates elect Andrew Pallotta as NYSUT president,” *NYSUT Media Relations*, April 8, 2017

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“Fewer Capital Region students boycott state exams,” *Albany Times Union*, March 29, 2017

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“All eyes on opt-out movement as state testing begins” *Politico New York*, March 27, 2017

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“N.Y.S. Board of Regents taps Susan Mittler, retired Ithaca teacher,” *Times Union*, March 21, 2017

<http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/N-Y-S-Board-of-Regents-taps-Susan-Mittler-11018404.php>

Raise the Age/Criminal Justice Reform

“DAs Sound Cautious Note On Raise The Age,” *State of Politics*, April 11, 2017

<http://www.nystateofpolitics.com/2017/04/das-sound-cautious-note-on-raise-the-age/>

- “Cuomo signs bill to raise age of criminal responsibility to 18,” *PIX 11 News*, April 10, 2017
<http://pix11.com/2017/04/10/cuomo-signs-bill-to-raise-age-of-criminal-responsibility-to-18/>
- “‘Raise the Age,’ Now Law in New York, Is Still a Subject of Debate,” *New York Times*, April 10, 2017
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/10/nyregion/raise-the-age-new-york.html>
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<http://crowley.house.gov/press-release/chairman-crowley-announces-kalief-browder-re-entry-success-act>
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<http://legislativegazette.com/archives/4989>
- “How New York state treats 16- and 17-year-olds in the criminal justice system” *Politifact* (in partnership with *The Buffalo News*)
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<http://www.thelcn.com/lcn01/livingston-county-sheriff-da-oppose-cuomos-raise-the-age-proposal-20170330>
- “*New York Daily News Editorial*: Legislative responsibility: Treat kids as kids, not criminals,” *New York Daily News*, March 29, 2017
<http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/legislative-responsibility-treat-kids-kids-not-criminals-article-1.3012088>
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<http://news10.com/2017/03/28/advocates-continuing-push-to-raise-the-age-of-criminal-responsibility-in-ny/>
- “Hundreds gather for 'raise the age' criminal justice rally in Albany,” *News 12 Long Island*, March 28, 2017
<http://longisland.news12.com/news/raise-the-age-criminal-justice-rally-held-in-albany-1.13328373>
- “Rally at New York Capitol Calls for Raise in Age When Teens Criminally Charged as Adults,” *Christian News Network*, March 29, 2017
<http://christiannews.net/2017/03/29/rally-at-new-york-capitol-calls-for-raise-in-age-when-teens-criminally-charged-as-adults/>
- “Guest Essay: Raise the Age,” *Rochester Democrat & Chronicle*, March 28, 2017 (Authors: Larry Marx, Chief Executive Officer of *The Children's Agenda* and Elaine Spaul, Executive Director of the Center for Youth)
<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/opinion/guest-column/2017/03/28/guest-essay-raise-age/99749304/>
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