

Legislative Update
End-of-the-Session Report

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John Northman, PhD, ABPP
Chair, NYSPA Legislative Committee

Each year the NYS Legislature meets during the first half of the calendar year, from January into June. The first half of the session typically places a major focus on budget items, since the NYS budget year begins on April 1 (with the recognition that this year the budget was not enacted until shortly before adjournment in June). The latter part of the session, from early April until the end-of-session adjournment, which this year occurred on June 5, sees a larger focus on non-budgetary policy issues. Most NYSPA issues are non-budgetary, and thus become topics of consideration during the final weeks and even final days of the legislative session.

As with any political, deliberative body, multiple forces and competing factors converge upon the NYS legislature. Importantly, each year NYSPA makes positive strides in raising its profile within the legislature, positioning itself favorably for future engagements.

Advocacy is consistently reported to be one of the top --- if not the top --- reason for joining NYSPA. Consider this simple, well-known, and often overlooked reality: The state controls the license. Protection of the profession and advancement of the profession center around the political world in Albany. That's where competing political and professional interests meet, compete, and yes, collide. There is no substitute for strong advocacy.

The summaries below, which provide a current status of legislative and related advocacy activities as of the end of the 2026 legislative session, are also aimed to "pull back the curtain and dig a bit more deeply behind the scenes" for a look at some of the less visible but highly relevant components of the Legislative Committee and its advocacy activities.

The "End of Session Report" prepared by ParkStrategies, NYSPA's lobbyist, then follows.

CURRENT LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

PSYPACT

This is a huge legislative win (A.6744 (Simone) / S.7136 (Skoufis)). Several years ago NYSPA laid the initial groundwork with legislation drafted by our lobbyist in conjunction with input from the PSYPACT Subcommittee, initially chaired by Dr. Barbara Meehan Reyes (prior to her entering the three-year presidential cycle) and subsequently by Dr. Kathy Keefe-Cooperman. Activities included creation of a two-sided colored handout widely distributed to legislators, working in conjunction with the Grassroots Subcommittee in a VoterVoice write-in campaign, welcoming the joint Lobby Day participation of NYSPA coalition partners, and leading a hybrid (live and virtual) NYSPA “town hall” forum aimed to highlight PSYPACT among the membership. The bill now awaits the governor’s anticipated signature. (Note: The governor has until the end of the calendar year to act upon bills passed by the legislature.)

Independent Practice of Master’s Level School Psychologists

This was another major win for NYSPA, with the successful opposition to proposed legislation that would have licensed master’s level school psychologists for independent practice outside the school setting (A.1745-A (Rosenthal) / S.3278-A (Brouk)). NYASP (NY Association of School Psychologists) has repeatedly introduced this bill for over a decade, and it may be anticipated that they will do so again for the 2027 legislative session beginning in January.

Prescriptive Authority (RxP)

NYSPA continues to advance legislation (A.2308 (McDonald) / S.263 (Harckham)) that would grant appropriately defined prescriptive authority to psychologists with specialized training, education, clinical experience, passage of an examination, and certification. This past winter the RxP Subcommittee, chaired by Dr. Ed Korber, has completed a major RxP white paper which has been distributed to all legislative offices and other selected governmental officials. RxP has now been added to NYSPA’s growing compendium of white papers, which aim to bring psychological expertise to current issues of importance to legislators.

Recently the State Education Department has returned a detailed “mark up” of NYSPA’s RxP bill. Members of the RxP Subcommittee, along with our lobbyist and others, will now take a deep dive into SED’s comments, likely leading to re-drafting parts of the bill. Combing through details and fine print may not be scintillating, but it’s absolutely critical in drafting legislation.

Workers Comp

For way too long the NYS workers comp system has shown little interest in psychology. During the past few years, under the leadership of Dr. Ashley Lyden, the Workers Comp

Subcommittee has initiated and continued to follow through with a major “push” for appropriate recognition and receptivity to the important role of psychology within the workers comp system. Most notably, the NYS Workers Comp Board has come to recognize and appreciate NYSPA’s significant engagement in advocating for psychology’s relevance and role within the Workers Comp system.

Insurance-Related Matters

Within NYSPA’s structure, the Insurance Committee is separate and independent of the Legislative Committee. The reality is that there is considerable overlap between insurance issues and legislative issues. The Insurance Committee, chaired by Dr. June Feder and now Interim Chair Dr. Barbara Gluckin, receives countless inquiries from NYSPA members concerning insurance company issues. There has long been an excellent, longstanding relationship between the Legislative and Insurance Committees.

When an insurance-related issue arises, the first course of action is usually to consider whether the issue can be resolved directly with the individual insurance company. Failing that step, the next course of action is typically to see if the issue can be addressed by looking at the issue from a regulatory perspective, often with the assistance of the NYS Insurance Department. Lastly and most challenging is seeking relief through legislation. Dr. Jerry Grodin, NYSPA’s Director of Professional Affairs, is typically involved in any and usually all of these steps. Thus the close working relationship among NYSPA’s Insurance Committee, NYSPA’s Legislative Committee, and NYSPA’s DPA works to the benefit of all NYSPA members in addressing insurance-related issues.

Immediately on the legislative front is a bill that would amend insurance law to shorten the lookback period for health insurance overpayment recovery (A.3365-A (Lavine) / S.5209-A (Scarcella-Spanton)). The current 24 month “clawback period” is one of the most egregious insurance company practices. NYSPA, as part of a coalition of health care professionals, will continue advocacy to amend insurance law to shorten the lookback period for health insurance overpayment recovery by health plans from 24 months to 12 months.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

With the recent and continuing proliferation of AI, NYSPA has placed itself front-and-center. The recently formed AI Subcommittee, initiated in Fall 2025 and chaired by Dr. Barbara Kapetanakes, has quickly delved into AI and its relevance to the profession and practice of psychology. Within a handful of months the AI Subcommittee created and disseminated an informative white paper to all 213 members of the NYS legislature.

During the final days of its 2026 session, the NYS legislature passed a bill (A.10379-C (Bores) / S.9051-B (Gonzales)) prohibiting AI operators from offering AI systems to

minors when those systems employed certain “unsafe” features. With the proliferation of AI, additional legislation regulating the use of AI may be anticipated. Of course New York is not alone in considering the applications and implications of AI, and toward that end the AI Subcommittee continues to focus attention, carefully study and note AI legislation in other states. In turn this can help to inform legislators and others here in NYS about the relevance of psychology in shaping future AI legislative initiatives.

Equitable School Discipline

In July 2020, at the recommendation of the Legislative Committee, the Council of Representatives approved placing a bill concerned with school codes of conduct and subsequent disciplinary action on NYSPA’s legislative agenda.

Looking broadly, this bill (A.118 (Solages) / S.134 (Jackson)) aims to create fair and equitable school discipline policies and practices, and reduce the troubling racial disparities by eliminating suspensions for minor infractions (late to class, cursing, insubordination) in all grades, limiting long-term suspensions from 180 days to 20 days, and prohibiting suspensions for students in K-3rd grades.

Since the original bill’s introduction, amendments have been suggested, with competing political interests.

The Equitable School Discipline Subcommittee, chaired by Drs. Warren Spielberg and Dinelia Rosa, works in conjunction with a coalition in its efforts to support legislation that would create a framework for the use of positive, graduated and age-appropriate school discipline strategies. Through the coalition NYSPA brings psychological expertise in addressing a major social issue.

Continuing Education

Subsequent to the enactment of the mandatory continuing education requirement for psychologists in NYS, the NYSPA CE Subcommittee, chaired by Dr. Rafael Javier, has drafted legislation which NYSPA then introduced that would amend the psychology CE law to require three hours of coursework in the areas of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in each three-year renewal cycle. Examination of the bill would lead one to think that there would be little opposition, but there has been no legislative movement on this bill. Recognizing the importance of this proposed CE requirement, NYSPA’s lobbyist and the CE Subcommittee in particular continue to seek ways to move this legislation forward.

Child Custody Evaluation – “Kyra’s Law”

During the 2010s a strong advocacy movement emerged aimed to protect children entrapped in bitter custody disputes between divorcing parents. In the most tragic

cases, children have been subjected to abuse, even to the point of death, following court-ordered visitation with an abusive parent.

In 2019 Governor Andrew Cuomo appointed a Blue-Ribbon Commission to make recommendations for legislation regarding child custody evaluations. Dr. Jerry Grodin, an acknowledged expert in this field who also was in the position of NYSPA's Director of Professional Affairs, was appointed to the commission. With my own background in child custody evaluation, including direct participation in drafting the original APA Child Custody Evaluation Guidelines, I provided both written and oral testimony before the commission. Approximately two years after its inception, the commission came forward with a very divided report and set of recommendations.

Across several subsequent years of legislative deliberations, efforts have been made to place limitations and restrictions on psychologists' involvement as impartial child custody evaluators and expert witnesses in these legal proceedings. During that time a NYSPA Child Custody Evaluation Subcommittee, chaired by Dr. Deena Abbe, became actively engaged in developing a strategy to rebut such legislative initiatives. Through NYSPA's advocacy efforts the adopted legislation removed all such suggested limitations and restrictions, preserving the ability of qualified psychologists to be engaged in child custody evaluations so as to assist the court in its deliberations.

The NYS legislature passed Kyra's Law (A.6194-C (Hevesi) / S.5998-C (Skoufis)) near the end of the recently concluded 2026 legislative session. The legislation specifies modifications on court proceedings in which there have been allegations of child abuse, domestic violence, coercive control, or other risks to a child's safety. Importantly for psychology, the legislation places no restrictions or limitations on a psychologist's involvement within this judicial process.

LOOKING DEEPER

Grassroots

The Grassroots Subcommittee, chaired by Dr. Dinelia Rosa, serves a unique function within NYSPA's legislative activities. Mobilizing grassroots efforts is a critical component of legislative advocacy. Grassroots efforts entail individual contact between constituent and legislator. This may take many forms, such as email, phone call, or personal visit; the latter can be particularly effective when it occurs in the legislator's district office, where the legislator is likely to feel "closer to home" and to the people who send him or her to Albany.

Thus NYSPA's Grassroots Subcommittee is designed to respond to any legislative matter and work in conjunction with any other issue-oriented legislative subcommittee as may be warranted. During the 2026 legislative session the Grassroots Subcommittee has worked on separate occasions in coordination with the PSYPACT

Subcommittee and the RxP Subcommittee, and has separately spearheaded a strong grassroots letter-writing campaign voicing opposition to the licensure for independent practice of master's level school psychologists.

Bill Review

Every year there are hundreds of bills that are introduced into the NYS legislature. ParkStrategies, NYSPA's lobbyist, flags bills which may have relevance for psychology. Every week during the legislative session these bills are noted and sent to the Bill Review Subcommittee, chaired by Dr. Les Schad. Members of this subcommittee read and review these flagged bills with a critical eye to possible relevance for psychology and NYSPA. Feedback from the Bill Review Subcommittee provides helpful perspectives, such as whether NYSPA may wish to support a bill, oppose a bill, monitor a bill, engage with a bill's sponsor, etc.

NYSPA-PAC

NYSPA's Political Action Committee occupies a unique place within NYSPA's structure. According to NYS law, a political action committee must have its own board of directors. Chaired by Dr. Janette Funk, NYSPA-PAC raises funds and then makes contributions to elected officials who are supportive of NYSPA. Recommendations for contributions most frequently come from ParkStrategies, NYSPA's lobbyist, but decisions must ultimately be made by the board of directors. Several members of the Legislative Committee also sit on the NYSPA-PAC board, and as chair of NYSPA-PAC Dr. Funk herself is also a member of the Legislative Committee. This organizational relationship between NYSPA-PAC and the LC benefits both NYSPA and NYSPA-PAC.

Federal Issues

While state issues are the primary focus of the Legislative Committee, it is important for the LC to be kept current on federal issues in Washington. Federal Advocacy Coordinators in each state serve as the link between APA in Washington and each state. As one of New York's FACs, Dr. Alan Hack reports at every LC meeting about significant happenings regarding psychology occurring at the national level.

Council Representatives to NYSPA's Executive Committee

A number of years ago NYSPA's Council of Representatives voted to elect two of its members to also serve two-year terms on the Executive Committee. (The EC is otherwise comprised of individuals elected to NYSPA-wide offices.) These two Council Representatives also sit as voting members of the LC. While there are usually other members of the LC who are also on the Council of Representatives, both the LC and

Council benefit from this formal link. Thank you to Drs. Ed Korber and Madalina Yellico for their current service as Council Representatives to the LC.

The Presidential Trio

Direction, support and continuity: NYSPA's leadership of president, president-elect and past-president are invaluable to the LC. Many thanks to Drs. Peggy Brady-Amoon (president), David Castro-Blanco (president-elect) and Barbara Meehan Reyes (past-president) for their ongoing support of the LC and NYSPA's legislative agenda.

Legislative Committee Secretary

With the many issues and activities occurring within the LC, it can be easy to lose track. Fortunately that's not a problem, thanks to the outstanding attention to detail and meeting minutes recorded by Dr. Chris Allen. Amazingly, she takes excellent notes while simultaneously being an active participant in substantive discussions during meetings!

Director of Professional Affairs

High among the responsibilities and tasks for NYSPA's Director of Professional Affairs is direct active engagement with the Legislative Committee and advocacy for NYSPA's legislative agenda among legislators, regulators, and other governmental officials. Since the creation of the DPA position in 2012, Dr. Jerry Grodin has done outstanding work in his multiple and diverse tasks. Perhaps most importantly, his continual presence as the face of psychology provides NYSPA and the profession invaluable credibility among legislators, government regulators, and other related professional and advocacy organizations.

Lobbyist

For more than 10 years NYSPA has been most fortunate to have been represented in Albany by an excellent, strong, well-connected, and accessible lobbying firm. While the firm name has undergone changes, there has been important continuity of personnel. Across the most recent years NYSPA has worked most closely with Tom Buchan and Tom Wickham at ParkStrategies. It would be difficult to underestimate the roles of "the two Toms," as we have come to call them. Their connections in the capital, their knowledge of legislative personnel and their advocacy for NYSPA have been invaluable, in addition to their presence at LC meetings and their ongoing engagement with NYSPA's legislative leadership throughout the year, regardless of whether or not the legislature is in session.

THANK YOU... AND LET'S MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER!

NYSPA is first and foremost about YOU and the members who support our organization and the legislative agenda. Thank you most especially for the many hundreds of members who sent countless messages to legislators on key issues, most especially during the final critical weeks and days of the legislative session.

For more information about the Legislative Committee and its current issues, go to the NYSPA website.

LC meetings are open to all NYSPA members, and we invite your attendance. LC and Council meetings occur on the same day, with LC meeting in the morning from 9-12 and Council following immediately in the afternoon.

We welcome your interest, ideas and involvement. We want to hear your questions, concerns and suggestions. Your active engagement strengthens NYSPA for the benefit of all psychologists.

Working together is truly a “win-win” for psychology, for NYSPA and our members, and for the people we serve.

The report below was prepared by ParkStrategies, NYSPA's lobbyist

New York State Psychological Association End of Session Report – June 2026

The 2026 New York State Legislative Session ended on Friday, June 5th, with the usually high end-of-session intensity as they moved through their packed agenda. Despite extended budget negotiations that stretched late into May, lawmakers maintained a strong pace, pushing through numerous significant bills in what had become a compressed timeframe. The legislature as a whole passed 759 bills, down from 856 in 2025. All eyes in Albany now turn to the June 23rd primary elections, as all 213 NYS legislators are up for re-election this year. There are significant primary for many long-term incumbents, and the results of these elections could have significant impacts on the New York legislature in the 2027 Legislative Session.

NYSPA 2026 LEGISLATIVE WINS:

NYSPA has successfully advocated for the passage of PSYPACT in both houses of the Legislature. – A.6744 (Simone)/ S.7136 (Skoufis)

PSYPACT has been a top affirmative priority for NYSPA over the past several sessions. During the final week of the 2026 New York State Legislative Session, the New York State Senate and Assembly passed

legislation that would adopt New York's entry into the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT), an interstate agreement permitting psychologists from participating states to provide telepsychology services and limited temporary in-person (30 days within a calendar year) psychological services across state lines. While this legislation awaits action by the Governor, New York is now one significant step closer to enactment.

A key component of this year's advocacy campaign was a joint lobby day that NYSPA hosted with its coalition partners, bringing psychologists and advocates directly to the State Capitol to engage with lawmakers. The event was further amplified by the participation of NFL wide receiver A.J. Brown, whose advocacy for mental health awareness helped elevate the conversation surrounding access to psychological care.

The bill will be delivered to the Governor for final action at some point before the end of the 2026 calendar year, and we will keep membership apprised of any updates.

NYSPA successfully opposed the Enactment of Legislation Licensing Masters-Level School Psychologists – A.1745-A (Rosenthal)/S.3278-A (Brouk)

NYSPA has successfully opposed the enactment of legislation that would create a new profession for school psychology practitioners, which would require candidates to hold at least a master's degree, meet practice experience requirements, and would also require passage of an examination prior to licensure for independent practice. This legislation would harm the psychology profession, as it would allow non-doctoral school psychologists to practice with the title of "school psychology practitioner" outside of a school setting. For the first time in the past several sessions, this bill did not pass in either house of the legislature, in part due to NYSPA's advocacy program. NYSPA focused on its opposition to this legislation during our lobby day, and utilized its grassroots network to engage membership in ensuring that the legislation did not move in the Assembly. NYSPA will continue to oppose this legislation in its current form.

NYSPA 2026 PRIORITIES:

Prescriptive Authority – A.2308 (McDonald)/ S.263 (Harckham)

NYSPA continues to advance legislation that would allow psychologists to prescribe appropriate medications for the treatment, diagnosis, and management of individuals under their care. The legislation would require specialized training, education, clinical experience, passage of an examination, and certification before such authority is granted. While we continue to build awareness on this critical legislation, it did not move in 2026. We have received technical feedback from the State Education Department, and are working through some of their concerns.

Limiting Insurance Clawback Period to 12 Months – A.3365A (Lavine)/ S.5209-A (Scarcella-Spanton)

NYSPA joined a coalition of medical professions to support legislation that would amend the insurance law to shorten the lookback period for health insurance overpayment recovery by health plans from 24 months to 12 months. This legislation seeks to address some of the difficulties faced by health care providers when dealing with health insurance plans. Insurance companies withhold money owed to

health care providers in an attempt to collect alleged overpayments from past patient claims. Health care providers must make the difficult choice of going through the expense and hassle of examining old records to verify the service and payment or concede to the insurance company's demands. Since insurance company resources far exceed that of the average health care provider, this legislation would provide a significant benefit to healthcare providers. While this bill did not pass either house of the legislature in 2026, we believe that it has potential for consideration in 2027.

Prohibiting AI companions from using features which are considered unsafe for minors – A.10379-C (Bores)/ S.9051-B (Gonzales)

At the end of the Session, the legislature passed legislation that aims to establish new protections for minors interacting with artificial intelligence companions and chatbots by prohibiting operators from offering AI systems to minors when those systems employ certain “unsafe” features. The bill targets AI companions that simulate human relationships, emotional attachment, authority figures, or companionship, and prohibits features such as excessive flattery or sycophancy, encouragement of secrecy or isolation, and content that promotes or facilitates suicide, self-harm, disordered eating, or substance abuse. The legislation authorizes enforcement by the Attorney General and is intended to address growing concerns regarding the impact of AI chatbots on the mental health and well-being of young users. The bill passed both houses of the Legislature unanimously and has been delivered to the Governor for consideration.

This is among several pieces of legislation evaluated by NYSPA’s newly created AI subcommittee. As the subcommittee continues its work, it will monitor all legislation affecting AI and its relationship to the profession and our patients.

Kyra’s Law – A.6194-C (Hevesi)/ S.5998-C (Skoufis)

At the end of the Session, the legislature passed Kyra’s Law, which aims to modify procedures governing custody and visitation proceedings where allegations of domestic violence, child abuse, coercive control, stalking, or other risks to a child's safety have been raised. The legislation would require courts to consider specified safety-related factors when making custody and visitation determinations, establish additional procedural requirements for the review of credible allegations of harm, require the appointment of an attorney for the child in certain cases, and direct courts to make findings related to child safety when issuing custody and visitation orders. The bill passed both houses of the Legislature in June 2026 and seeks to place greater emphasis on child safety considerations in family court proceedings.

NYSPA engaged extensively over several years on earlier versions of the legislation, which contained provisions that would have curtailed the use of child custody evaluations and restricted the ability of psychologists to conduct and present findings from those evaluations. As a result of those advocacy efforts, the final version passed by the Legislature removes those provisions and preserves the ability of qualified psychologists to continue providing child custody evaluations in accordance with existing professional standards and court procedures.

Solutions Not Suspensions – A.118 (Solages)/ S.134 (Jackson)

Over the past several sessions, NYSPA has worked in support of coalition efforts to support legislation that would create a framework for the use of positive, graduated and age-appropriate school discipline strategies; eliminate the use of zero-tolerance discipline and out-of-school suspensions for minor infractions; significantly limit suspensions for students in pre-kindergarten through third grade; limit suspensions to twenty school days; and ensure students receive instruction when removed from school. The bill would also increase due process protections for students, ensuring that they have access to adult representation through the suspension hearing process. Notably, this bill would not ban the use of suspensions entirely. Rather than focusing on sensationalist scenarios and arguments, it focuses on the reality of the situation, which is that Black, brown, disabled, foster care, and low-income students are disproportionately suspended, and the results are learning loss, isolation, drop out, involvement in the criminal legal system, and even deportation. This bill did not move in 2026, but we will continue to support it moving forward.