State Senator Liz Krueger's
Albany Update | September 2026

Dear Neighbor,

This Albany Update provides an overview of the 2026 New York State Legislative Session and the 2026-27 State Budget. This was a busy session, so what is included below is only a partial list of key legislation. I have focused on bills that passed both houses of the Legislature and have either been signed into law or are awaiting action by the Governor. Bills that have been acted on by the Governor have their chapter numbers listed. You can read more about these and other bills at www.nysenate.gov.

My office sends regular emails sharing legislative and community updates, resources from government agencies and nonprofit organizations, and invitations to upcoming events. If you would like to be added to my email list, go to krueger.nysenate.gov/contact and click the button to subscribe.

As always, if you have any questions or need assistance, please email or call my office at lkrueger@nysenate.gov or 212-490-9535.

Best,

Liz

2026-27 STATE BUDGET

Although this year's budget was passed nearly two months late, it delivered critically important investments in education, childcare, environmental sustainability, healthcare, and the arts. The Legislature was able to negotiate meaningful policy wins on issues that matter most to New Yorkers, including rising utility costs, housing affordability, and protecting our immigrant neighbors.

Unfortunately, the budget had significant shortcomings, stemming in large part from the outsized power our State Constitution grants the Executive in the budget process. At the Governor's insistence, it included a major rollback of our State's landmark climate law, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. This was a victory for the oil and gas industries that will do nothing to lower energy bills, while keeping us locked into an unaffordable, outdated energy system. I was also deeply disappointed by the Governor's refusal to provide assistance to the New Yorkers who lost affordable health coverage through the Essential Plan due to federal cuts. And while I support the concept of a pied-à-terre tax, the Governor's last-minute inclusion of the surcharge without any input has created numerous implementation challenges.

Highlights of this year's State Budget are below.

Addressing Rising Utility Costs. The Legislature negotiated key reforms to address rising energy costs by strengthening utility oversight, increasing accountability, and returning money to New Yorkers. Utilities will be required to return more of their excess revenues to ratepayers, proposed rate increases must be limited to the rate of inflation (with certain safety exceptions), and executive salaries, lobbying costs, and "gold-plated" projects can no longer be used to justify rate hikes. Regulators were given new tools to review proposed rate increases and to reject those that go beyond what is necessary to provide reliable service. More than $1.2 billion in additional funding was also allocated for energy efficiency upgrades, home weatherization, and energy rebate checks.

Investing in Our Next Generation. Once again, the budget invested record funding into both K-12 and higher education. It expanded universal childcare in NYC to all three-year-olds and began a phase-in of universal childcare for two-year-olds, with all two-year-olds covered by 2029. The Legislature added $500 million in capital funding for SUNY and CUNY and increased support for scholarship programs for first-generation college students and those entering high-demand fields.

Expanding and Protecting Affordable Housing. The budget included $140 million for NYCHA, $55 million for eviction prevention legal services, and an additional $250 million for the current five-year housing plan. It bolstered NYC's J-51 program that helps residential buildings to complete critical capital and environmental upgrades. I am gratified that the budget also increased the maximum income limits from $50,000 to $75,000 for the Rent Freeze (SCRIE and DRIE) and property tax exemption (SCHE and DHE) programs for older adults and people with disabilities. NYC must opt into the higher limits before they can go into effect; as of this writing, a City Council bill (Intro 978) is pending that would approve the expanded eligibility for SCRIE and DRIE and be retroactive to July 1, 2026.

Fighting for Our Environment. The budget provided a record $450 million for the Environmental Protection Fund and $750 million in clean water funding. For the second year in a row, $1 billion was allocated for the Sustainable Future Fund to support money-saving climate initiatives like reducing emissions from buildings, greening our transportation and school systems, and deploying renewable energy. It also included measures to make it faster and cheaper to bring new solar energy projects online, reducing the need for more expensive energy generation and infrastructure.

Responding to Healthcare Needs. Despite devastating federal Medicaid cuts, the budget delivered $750 million in new targeted healthcare investments, $500 million for our safety net and distressed hospitals, $20 million for Federally Qualified Health Centers, and more than $57 million for reproductive healthcare. In order to improve access to care, the budget enacted key reforms limiting prior authorization requirements by insurance companies and expanding continuity of care protections for patients when doctors or hospitals leave an insurance network.

Public Safety. The budget included new buffer zone protections to safeguard the right of people of any faith to enter and exit houses of worship without harassment or fear for their safety. This new law balances the rights of individuals to practice their religion free from intimidation with equally important free speech rights, both of which are afforded by our First Amendment. To address the rise of deadly traffic accidents caused by reckless drivers, the budget also provided NYC with critical new tools to crack down on "super-speeders" who endanger public safety.

Protecting Our Immigrant Neighbors. As the federal government continues to aggressively target our immigrant neighbors, the budget implemented meaningful measures to better protect our communities. Statutory changes limited local law enforcement cooperation with civil immigration enforcement, banned law enforcement from wearing masks, enabled private individuals to file lawsuits against government officials for violating their constitutional and civil rights, and empowered sensitive locations like hospitals, schools, and places of worship to prevent access to nonpublic areas without a judicial warrant.

Restoring Funding for Arts and Cultural Institutions. The Legislature was able to fully restore the Governor's proposed $60 million cuts to the New York State Council on the Arts, helping to sustain vital art and cultural institutions statewide.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2026 NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

CONSUMER PROTECTION

The Legislature passed a number of important bills expanding the rights of consumers, including:

- **Banning Surveillance Pricing:** S.8623B prohibits the use of personal consumer data to set the prices of goods and services, as well as the collection of data to be utilized for this purpose.
- **Prohibiting Unsolicited Loan Checks:** S.9570A bans banks and other lenders from mailing unsolicited loan checks, which are frequently used to trick people into high-interest debt, and voids any debt that results from such checks.
- **Barring Subscription Fees for Car Functions:** S.9348A prevents car manufacturers and dealers from charging subscription fees for functions that rely on hardware installed at the time of sale and do not incur ongoing costs to maintain.

The Senate passed several additional bills protecting consumers that unfortunately did not pass the Assembly, including legislation requiring **Easy Cancellation of Mobile App Subscription Services** (S.4391), the **Consumer Grocery Pricing Fairness Act** (S.8563), the **NY Junk Fee Prevention Act** (S.363B), and my **NY Gift Certificate Scam Prevention Act** (S.704A).

DATA CENTERS AND REGULATING AI

At the end of this year's Legislative Session, the Legislature passed an omnibus bill, the **Responsible Data Center Development Act** (S.10642), to address the environmental, energy affordability, labor, and community impacts of new data centers being proposed across New York. This comprehensive legislation implements a one-year moratorium on permitting for new data centers over 20MW, a measure based on a bill that I carried. The bill includes many other commonsense regulatory initiatives, such as requiring the Department of Environmental Conservation to complete an environmental impact report examining the current and projected impacts on water, electricity, land use, tax revenue, and pollution. It requires data centers to pay for all new costs they impose on the electricity grid, meet clear energy efficiency and renewable energy targets, and fund community benefit programs for their host communities.

As of this writing, the Governor has not yet signed S.10642. However, on July 14, she issued **Executive Order 62**, which contains some similar provisions to the legislation, most notably implementing a moratorium on permitting for new data centers over 50MW. The executive order was a good first step. Now, the Governor must sign S.10642 to ensure rigorous protections are put in place to safeguard energy affordability and the health of our air, water, land, and people.

In addition to tackling the impacts of data centers, the Legislature passed a number of bills to secure protections for consumers in the rapidly developing landscape of AI, including the **Artificial Intelligence Training Data Transparency Act** (S.6955A), the **NY Fundamental AI Requirements (FAIR) in News Act** (S.8451B), **Warnings on Generative AI Systems** (S.934A), and **Preventing AI Scraping on News Sites** (S.9934).

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Unfortunately, due to the rollback of our State's landmark climate protections in the budget, this was a difficult year for protecting the shared environment that all New Yorkers depend on. However, several important environmental bills passed both houses, including:

- **Solar Up Now New York (SUNNY) Act:** S.8512C, which I introduced, legalizes "balcony solar," the small, plug-in solar panels that families can use to lower their energy bills and generate renewable energy, opening the door for millions more New Yorkers to have access to cheap, clean solar power.
- **Healthy Homes Right to Know Act:** S.1280B, which I introduced, requires labels to be affixed to gas stoves sold in stores, informing customers of the scientific consensus around negative indoor air pollution and health impacts.
- **Closing Loopholes in Tropical Hardwood Restrictions:** S.8851, which I introduced, closes long-standing loopholes that have allowed State agencies and municipalities to continue purchasing tropical hardwoods linked to deforestation in tropical rainforests, despite restrictions that have been in place under State law for 30 years.
- **The Electric Landscaping Equipment Rebate Program:** S.1574A, which I introduced, creates a rebate program for landscapers who buy battery-powered electric equipment, such as leaf blowers, to help reduce gas-powered equipment that emit a stunning amount of air pollution and noise.
- **Protecting Our Drinking Water:** S.3207B protects New Yorkers' health by codifying the current federal limits for exposure to PFAS, "forever chemicals," in State law and requiring the State Department of Health to determine if additional safeguards against cumulative PFAS exposure are needed in the face of the federal government's efforts to roll back protections.

Several environmental bills passed the Senate but were not acted upon by the Assembly this Session, including the **Clean Deliveries Act** (S.1180B), a **Prohibition on the Sale of Certain Household Products Containing PFAS** (S.9073), and the **Beauty Justice Act** (S.2057B).

GOVERNMENT REFORM

Several bills passed both houses to make government and public authorities more transparent and responsive, including:

- **Time Limits for FOIL Responses:** S.10098 establishes mandatory deadlines for State agencies to respond to requests for records under the Freedom of Information Law and requires written notifications about efforts being taken to make records available as quickly as possible.
- **Restoring Power to the Public Authorities Control Board (PACB):** S.2459 empowers the PACB to be more independent by removing legal restrictions that constrained members' authority to make decisions and removing the Governor's full discretion to remove members.
- **Increasing Accountability of Local Development Corporations:** S.6165A subjects public nonprofit corporations engaging in economic development activity as subsidiaries of local governments to the Open Meetings Law and FOIL requirements, increases State oversight over these entities, and limits the purpose for which these entities can be established.

Additional bills passed the Senate to improve government accountability that unfortunately did not pass the Assembly, including legislation to **Bar NDAs in Public Economic Development Contracts** (S.373), **Award Attorneys' Fees for Successful Plaintiffs in FOIL Cases** (S.1418), and **Fully Decouple the State Tax Code from the Wasteful Federal Opportunity Zone Program** (S.3340).

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HEALTH

The Legislature expanded access to healthcare while making it more affordable and accessible for New Yorkers by passing several bills, including:

- **Health Data Privacy Act:** S.9269, which I introduced, requires companies to obtain consent before tracking, storing, or selling sensitive health information. This will protect New Yorkers' health privacy from third-party purchasers and give users control over data related to diagnoses or inferred diagnoses.
- **Protecting Vaccine Access:** Ch.115/S.9598 and Ch.119/S.9599 protect individual and public health by ensuring access to evidence-based childhood vaccines, keeping recommendations rooted in science, and requiring commercial insurance companies to continue covering recommended vaccines, regardless of decisions made by the federal government.
- **Youth Sports Concussion Information:** S.7266, which I introduced at the urging of a teenage constituent, requires youth soccer, ice hockey, lacrosse, and field hockey programs to provide information about the health risks of concussions and subconcussive blows to parents of participants.
- **Keeping Independent Pharmacies Open:** S.5939C requires pharmacy benefit managers to reimburse participating pharmacies at the national average drug acquisition cost rate, plus a dispensing fee, in order to keep community pharmacies open and enable them to better serve the community.

Many more important healthcare bills passed the Senate but were not acted upon by the Assembly. These include my bills to **Require Certain Doctors Being Disciplined for Misconduct to Notify Patients of Their Status** (S.1476B) and **Establish an Abortion Access Clinical Training Program** (S.1438A) and others introduced by colleagues to **Prohibit Pay for Delay Drug Agreements** (S.3203) and **Require Community Engagement Before a Hospital Closes** (S.9388).

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Building on the State's actions in past years to safeguard access to reproductive health, the Legislature passed a number of bills to reduce costs and protect against attacks, including:

- **Protecting the Prescribers and Dispensers of Abortion Medication:** S.8544 protects those who prescribe or dispense abortion medication from being charged with a crime if the FDA revokes a drug's license.
- **Insurance Coverage of Pharmacist-Provided Contraceptives:** S.8869 requires State-regulated commercial insurance policies to cover self-administered contraceptives dispensed by pharmacists.
- **Increasing Access to Menstrual Products:** S.4692 requires private colleges to offer menstrual products free of charge in all restrooms, building on State law that already required this in public universities.

HOUSING

In addition to expanding income eligibility for the SCRIE and DRIE programs for the first time in over a decade as part of the budget after years of advocacy, the Legislature passed a number of housing bills, including:

- **Protecting Tenants from Misleading Lease Riders:** S.9650, which I introduced, prohibits building owners from willfully including false or misleading information in lease riders provided to tenants in buildings participating in the Affordable New York Housing Program (formerly known as 421-a), requires standardized rider language, and establishes a fine of $1,000 for violations.
- **Supporting Homeowners Facing Foreclosure:** S.2627A establishes the Homeowner Protection Program, which provides free housing counseling and legal services to homeowners facing foreclosure, in State law.
- **Fair and Transparent Real Estate Listings Act:** S.10274 increases fairness and competition in the residential real estate market by requiring the timely marketing of properties on platforms accessible to the general public and limiting private listings.

Many more important housing bills passed the Senate but were not acted upon by the Assembly, including legislation to **Prevent Phony Building Demolition Applications** (S.2134A), **Increase Fairness in Foreclosure Sales** (S.8595), and **Improve Enforcement of NYC's Affordable Housing Zoning Requirements** (S.10088).

PROMOTING YOUTH WELL-BEING & EDUCATION

The Legislature passed a number of important bills to improve the health and safety of young people, including:

- **Protecting Minors from Unsafe Chatbots:** S.9051B prohibits AI chatbots from using features which are unsafe for young people, such as impersonating a real or fictional person, promoting self-harm, or storing and using data on a user's health, and requires age verification.
- **Prohibiting Chatbot Toys:** S.9408A bars the manufacture, distribution, and sale of toys with embedded AI companions in the State.
- **Freedom to Read Act:** S.8630C requires every school district to adopt clear public policies for reviewing challenges to library materials, protects students' access to a broad range of reading materials, and ensures that books cannot be removed solely because someone disagrees with the viewpoint they represent.
- **Safeguarding Private Student Loan Borrowers and Cosigners:** S.5598B establishes comprehensive cosigner protections and transparency requirements, prohibits loan acceleration, bans changes to loan terms when a cosigner dies or files for bankruptcy, and requires debt collectors to provide detailed loan documentation before attempting collection.

PUBLIC SAFETY & SUPPORTING CRIME SURVIVORS

The Legislature passed several important bills to bolster public safety and support survivors of crimes, including:

- **Modernizing Harassment Laws:** S.2273, which I introduced, adds contact via text, private message, direct message, email, or other electronic communication with the intent to harass or threaten an individual to the definition of aggravated harassment.
- **Francisco's Law:** S.9629 requires all firearms to be stored in a secure container or rendered incapable of firing with a trigger lock when not under the owner's immediate control and establishes criminal penalties for failure to safely store firearms accessible by a minor.
- **CREEP Act:** S.3394A enables victims of stalking or other harassing behavior, online or in person, to seek civil orders of protection without requiring an intimate or familiar relationship between the parties or an arrest to have taken place.

- **Kyra's Law:** S.5998C ensures that the safety of children is prioritized in child custody and visitation cases by requiring judges to conduct enhanced inquiries when a party makes a credible allegation of domestic violence, child abuse, or other act posing a substantial risk of harm to the child.

Several other important bills to support survivors passed the Senate but unfortunately were not acted upon by the Assembly, including my bill **Expanding the Rape Shield Law to Civil Litigation** (S.9894), **Removing the "Voluntary Intoxication Exclusion" for Sex Crimes** (S.10632), and **Increasing Compensation to Crime Victims by the Office of Victim Services** (S.156A).

TRANSPORTATION AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

The Senate passed several bills to increase safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers that were unfortunately not acted upon by the Assembly, including:

- **Liability Insurance for E-Bike Deliveries:** S.1162A, which I introduced, requires third-party food delivery services to carry no-fault insurance coverage that covers the injuries or deaths of pedestrians and bike delivery workers resulting from qualifying accidents.
- **Safety Requirements for Commercial E-Bike Operations:** S.6845B, which I introduced, requires third-party delivery services to verify the registration of mopeds and motor vehicles used by employees and independent contractors to help ensure that only legally operated vehicles are being used and reduce the risk of unregistered vehicles on the road.
- **MTA Rider Representation Act:** S.1148 increases the number of voting positions on the MTA Board from 17 to 21 and enhances representation of MTA riders with disabilities.
- **Noise Tax on Nonessential Helicopters:** S.1140A imposes a noise tax on all nonessential helicopter and seaplane flights originating in New York City.

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Albany, NY 12247

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– UPCOMING EVENTS –

VIRTUAL TOWN HALLS

Election Security
Thursday, September 24
6:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Money in Politics
Tuesday, September 29
6:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Medicare Parts A, B, C, and D: For Those New to Medicare or Considering Changes During Open Enrollment
Monday, November 16
2 pm – 3:30 pm

IN-PERSON EVENTS

Older Adult Resource Fair
Thursday, October 1
11:30 am – 2:30 pm
Lenox Hill Neighborhood House
331 East 70th Street
(between 1st and 2nd Avenues)

Electronics and Textile Recycling with the LES Ecology Center
Saturday, October 3
10 am – 2 pm
Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza
East 47th Street (between 1st and 2nd Avenues)

Free Paper Shredding
Friday, October 23
9 am – 12 pm
Motorgate Turnaround
688 Main Street, Roosevelt Island

Additional details and RSVP forms for upcoming events will be shared via my email updates.

You can also RSVP by emailing lkrueger@nysenate.gov or calling 212-490-9535.

To receive email updates on legislation, events, and resources, join my mailing list at **krueger.nysenate.gov/contact** or scan this QR code.