

5/2/18-ANYONE CONVICTED OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS NOW BANNED FROM OWNING A FIREARM IN NEW YORK. GOVERNOR CUOMO SIGNED THE MEASURE INTO LAW YESTERDAY. PREVIOUSLY ONLY FELONY CRIMES AND CERTAIN VIOLENT MISDEMEANORS COULD RESULT IN THE SEIZURE OF A SUSPECT'S GUNS. THE NEW LAW EXPANDS THAT TO COVER MISDEMEANOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRIMES INCLUDING A VARIETY OF ASSAULT, HARASSMENT, AND TAMPERING, AND TRESPASSING CHARGES.

5/2/18-IT'S TIME TO END NEW YORK'S BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN TAX INCENTIVES FOR FILM AND TELEVISION PROGRAMS. THAT'S ACCORDING TO SOME LEGISLATORS IN ALBANY. THE MOVE COMES AFTER REVELATIONS THAT PRODUCER HARVEY WEINSTEIN HAD SEXUALLY HARASSED ACTRESSES FOR DECADES, EVEN AS HIS COMPANY WAS COLLECTING FIVE MILLION DOLLARS IN TAX SUBSIDIES FROM THE STATE. CRITICS SAY THE INDUSTRY ISN'T PRODUCING ANYWHERE NEAR THE NUMBER OF JOBS THE PROGRAM IS SUPPOSED TO GENERATE AND COSTS NEARLY HALF A BILLION DOLLARS A YEAR.

5/3/18-THE BATTLE OVER TERM LIMITS LEAD TO ANOTHER CONTENTIOUS MEETING OF UTICA'S COMMON COUNCIL LAST NIGHT. TWO LOCAL LAWS WERE VOTED DOWN DURING THE SESSION, WHICH SAW A SPIRITED EXCHANGE OF WORDS BETWEEN OFFICIALS. BOTH MEASURES WERE INTENDED TO REVERSE LAST YEAR'S EXTENSION OF THE CITY'S TERM LIMITS TO TWELVE YEARS. BUT THE CITY'S CORPORATION COUNCIL SAID THERE WERE SERIOUS FLAWS IN THE WORDING OF THE LEGISLATION, AND THOSE ISSUES COULD HAVE REMOVED TERM LIMITS ENTIRELY.

5/4/18-SHOULD NEW YORK BAN MARKSMANSHIP CLASSES AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS? A NEW PROPOSAL IN ALBANY WOULD DO JUST THAT. THE MEASURE WOULD PROHIBIT BOTH SHOOTING AND ARCHERY PROGRAMS. SUPPORTERS SAY THE LAW IS A MATTER OF PUBLIC SAFETY DESIGNED TO KEEP STUDENTS SAFE. BUT OPPONENTS POINT OUT THAT STUDENTS HAVE BEEN GETTING RIFLE AND ARCHERY INSTRUCTION FOR YEARS WITHOUT INCIDENT. THAT INCLUDES COMPETITIVE SHOOTING AND ARCHERY EVENTS SPONSORED BY R-O-T-C AND THE STATE ITSELF, THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION.

5/7/18-THE DAYS OF FIREMEN AND POLICEMEN IN NEW YORK ARE NUMBERED. A BILL MAKING IT'S WAY THROUGH THE LEGISLATURE WOULD OFFICIALLY REPLACE ALL GENDERED MENTIONS OF FIRST RESPONDERS WITH THE TERMS FIREFIGHTER AND POLICE OFFICER. TO SUPPORTERS IT'S A MINOR CHANGE THAT BRINGS THE STATE'S LEGAL DOCUMENTS IN LINE WITH REALITY, WITH WOMEN INCREASINGLY INTEGRATED INTO POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS. BUT THE PROPOSAL IS GETTING SOME PUSHBACK FROM OPPONENTS WHO SAY THE USE OF MAN IS SHORTHAND FOR HUMAN AND PERFECTLY ACCEPTABLE.

5/7/18-IT'S TIME TO LEGALIZE RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA IN NEW YORK. THAT'S ACCORDING TO A NEW QUINNIPIAC POLL THAT FOUND 63 PERCENT OF NEW YORKERS ARE IN FAVOR OF ALLOWING ADULTS TO POSSESS SMALL AMOUNTS OF POT FOR PERSONAL USE. THAT'S THE HIGHEST APPROVAL RATING THE QUESTION HAS EVER GARNERED, BEATING THE PREVIOUS HIGH MARK OF 57 PERCENT BACK IN 2014. ACCORDING TO THE POLL ONLY 32 PERCENT OF NEW YORKERS ARE AGAINST LEGALIZATION.

5/8/19-TODAY IS STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL ERIC SCHNEIDERMAN'S LAST DAY ON THE JOB. HE OFFICIALLY RESIGNED LAST NIGHT LESS THAN THREE HOURS AFTER FOUR WOMEN ACCUSED HIM OF BEING PHYSICALLY ABUSIVE. THE STORY PUBLISHED IN THE NEW YORKER INCLUDED DETAILED ACCOUNTS OF HIM CHOKING AND VIOLENTLY STRIKING THE WOMEN AFTER BOUTS OF HEAVY DRINKING. THE STATE'S SOLICITOR GENERAL WILL TEMPORARILY TAKE OVER THE A-G'S OFFICE WHEN SCHNEIDERMAN RESIGNS. THE LEGISLATURE WILL NOW HAVE TO CHOOSE A REPLACEMENT.

5/9/18-GOVERNOR CUOMO HAS APPOINTED A SPECIAL PROSECUTOR TO INVESTIGATE THE CHARGES AGAINST FORMER ATTORNEY GENERAL ERIC SCHNEIDERMAN. THAT INCLUDES WHETHER HE USED STATE RESOURCES OR STAFF TO COVER UP THE ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE FROM FOUR WOMEN. HE OFFICIALLY RESIGNED LAST NIGHT AND BARBARA UNDERWOOD, THE STATE'S SOLICITOR GENERAL, WAS SWORN IN AS HIS TEMPORARY REPLACEMENT. THE LEGISLATURE IS NOW CONSIDERING A LONG LIST OF POSSIBLE APPOINTEES FOR THE POSITION, WITH A PERMANENT REPLACEMENT DECIDED BY THIS FALL'S ELECTION.

5/14/18-SIXTEEN CANDIDATES ARE VYING FOR THE OFFICE OF STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL ACCORDING TO ALBANY INSIDERS. THE LIST OF POTENTIAL REPLACEMENTS FOR FORMER A-G ERIC SCHNEIDERMAN WAS LEAKED ON SATURDAY. ALL OF THE CANDIDATES ARE LAWYERS, AND MOST ARE CURRENTLY SERVING IN STATE GOVERNMENT. THEY'RE SCHEDULED TO BE INTERVIEWED BY THE STATE ASSEMBLY STARTING TOMORROW, BUT IT'S NOT CLEAR IF THE LEGISLATURE WILL MOVE FORWARD WITH APPOINTING A REPLACEMENT. INSTEAD, ACTING A-G BARBARA UNDERWOOD MAY STAY IN PLACE TILL THE END OF THE YEAR.

5/15/18-YESTERDAY'S SUPREME COURT DECISION REVERSING THE BAN ON SPORTS BETTING COULD HAVE A HUGE IMPACT ON THE UTICA ROME AREA. WITHIN HOURS OF THE RULING THE ONEIDA INDIAN ANNOUNCED IT WOULD SOON BE OFFERING SPORTS BOOKS AT A NUMBER OF VENUES. THAT'S LIKELY TO INCLUDE THE TURNING STONE, YELLOW BRICK ROAD, AND POINT PLACE CASINOS. MANAGEMENT AT VERNON DOWNS IS ALSO LOOKING FORWARD TO ADDING BETTING, BUT THAT CAN'T HAPPEN UNTIL THE STATE LEGISLATURE APPROVES LEGALIZATION.

5/15/18-A REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF LEGALIZING MARIJUANA IN NEW YORK IS JUST DAYS AWAY. THAT'S ACCORDING TO GOVERNOR CUOMO. HE'S BEEN UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE FROM ACTIVISTS AND CYNTHIA NIXON, HIS DEMOCRATIC CHALLENGER FOR THE GOVERNOR'S SEAT. SHE'S BEEN A STRIDENT SUPPORTER OF LEGALIZATION SINCE ANNOUNCING HER CANDIDACY. A RECENT QUINNIPIAC POLL FOUND 63 PERCENT OF NEW YORKERS ARE IN FAVOR OF ALLOWING ADULTS TO POSSESS SMALL AMOUNTS OF POT FOR RECREATIONAL USE.

5/16/18-WHO WOULD MAKE THE BEST ATTORNEY GENERAL? THAT WAS THE QUESTION BEHIND HEARINGS IN ALBANY YESTERDAY. LEGISLATORS SPENT THE DAY QUESTIONING 13 POTENTIAL REPLACEMENTS FOR FORMER ATTORNEY GENERAL ERIC SCHNEIDERMAN. THREE CANDIDATES HAVE DROPPED OUT OF CONTENTION, WHILE OTHERS HAVE MOVE FORWARD WITH ORGANIZING CAMPAIGN COMMITTEES TO OFFICIALLY RUN FOR THE POSITION IN THIS FALL'S ELECTIONS. DURING THE HEARINGS BARBARA UNDERWOOD, THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL, SAID SHE HAD NO INTEREST IN RUNNING FOR THE OFFICE AND WAS READY TO SERVE OUT SCHNEIDERMAN'S TERM.

5/21/18-THE DAYS OF TIPPING IN NEW YORK COULD BE NUMBERED. GOVERNOR CUOMO'S PUSH TO GET RID OF THE TIPPED WORKER WAGE WAS THE FOCUS OF THE LATEST HEARING IN ALBANY. THE SPECIAL TIPPING RATE ALLOWS BUSINESSES LIKE RESTAURANTS AND BARS TO PAY THEIR EMPLOYEES LESS THAN MINIMUM WAGE IF THEY DERIVE A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF THEIR INCOME FROM TIPPING. DURING THE LATEST HEARING SOME OF THE BIGGEST PUSHBACK AGAINST THE IDEA CAME FROM RESTAURANT WORKERS THEMSELVES, WHO WORRY THEY'LL TAKE A HIT TO THEIR INCOME IF THE MEASURE GOES THROUGH.

5/23/18-BARBARA UNDERWOOD IS OFFICIALLY THE NEW YORK'S ATTORNEY GENERAL, BECOMING THE FIRST WOMAN TO EVER HOLD THE OFFICE. THE APPOINTMENT COMES AFTER A JOINT SESSION OF THE STATE LEGISLATURE VOTED HER INTO OFFICE. THE PROCEEDINGS SAW UNDERWOOD PRAISED BY MEMBERS OF BOTH PARTIES FOR HER EXPERIENCE AND PROFESSIONALISM. SHE'LL SERVE OUT THE REMAINING MONTHS OF FORMER ATTORNEY GENERAL ERIC SCHNEIDERMAN'S TERM, AND BE REPLACED IN JANUARY BY THE WINNER OF THIS FALL'S ELECTION.

5/24/18-THE STATE LEGISLATURE ISN'T LIKELY TO APPROVE SPORTS BETTING THIS SESSION, BUT IT COULD MOVE ON LEGALIZING ONLINE POKER. WITH JUST OVER A MONTH LEFT IN THE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR OFFICIALS SAY THERE ISN'T ENOUGH TIME TO HAMMER OUT THE DETAILS OF ALLOWING SPORTS BOOKS AT NEW YORK'S CASINOS. BUT THERE MAY BE ENOUGH TIME TO PUSH THROUGH A MEASURE CLASSIFYING ONLINE POKER AS A GAME OF SKILL, EFFECTIVELY LEGALIZING IT FOR NEW YORK RESIDENTS.

5/24/18-NEW YORK'S REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC PARTY CONVENTIONS ARE UNDERWAY, BUT THEY AREN'T OFFERING MANY SURPRISES. YESTERDAY GOVERNOR CUOMO WAS OVERWHELMINGLY VOTED TO BE THE PARTY'S BANNER HOLDER FOR CHIEF EXECUTIVE, DESPITE AN INSURGENT PRIMARY CHALLENGE FROM ACTRESS CYNTHIA NIXON. MUCH THE SAME STORY UNFOLDED AT THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION, WHERE THE PARTY FAITHFUL CHOSE DUCHESS COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARC MOLINARO FOR THEIR TOP SPOT.

5/30/18-WILL THE STATE LEGISLATURE GET ANYTHING DONE IN THE NEXT THREE WEEKS? WITH THE CLOCK TICKING TOWARD THE END OF THIS YEAR'S SESSION ON JUNE 20TH IT'S LOOKING INCREASINGLY UNLIKELY THAT ANY MAJOR LEGISLATION WILL GET PASSED. STILL UP ON THE AIR IS THE FATE OF LEGALIZED GAMBLING, GETTING RID OF THE STATE'S SPECIAL WAGE FOR TIPPED WORKERS, AND LEGALIZING RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA. DESPITE ANOTHER ROUND OF CORRUPTION TRIALS THERE ALSO DOESN'T SEEM TO BE MUCH ENTHUSIASM IN ALBANY FOR REFORMING THE LEGISLATURE'S ETHICS RULES.