

Political

3/1/18-ARE GOVERNOR CUOMO'S PROPOSED TAX REFORMS LEGAL? THAT'S WHAT SOME LAWMAKERS IN ALBANY ARE ASKING THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE. IN AN EFFORT TO WORK AROUND THE THEN THOUSAND DOLLAR CAP ON STATE AND LOCAL TAXES IN LAST YEAR'S FEDERAL TAX REFORM CUOMO IS BACKING A NEW PAYROLL TAX AND THE CREATION OF CHARITABLE FOUNDATIONS TO FUND SCHOOL DISTRICTS. IF THE PROPOSALS GO THROUGH AND THE I-R-S RULES AGAINST THEM THAT COULD LEAVE NEW YORKERS OWING THOUSANDS IN TAXES AND PENALTIES.

2/27/18-HOW CAN NEW YORK KEEP STUDENTS SAFE? THAT'S THE QUESTION LAWMAKERS IN ALBANY ARE HOPING TO ANSWER. IN THE WAKE OF THE LATEST SCHOOL SHOOTING IN FLORIDA LEGISLATORS HAVE PROPOSED A FLURRY OF BILLS FEATURING EVERYTHING FROM BETTER IN SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES TO TIGHTER RESTRICTIONS ON WHO CAN OWN A GUN. THE STATE'S SHERIFF'S ASSOCIATION IS FOLLOWING UP THEIR CALL FOR ALBANY TO FUND AN ARMED RESOURCE OFFICER AT EVERY SCHOOL WITH HEAVY LOBBYING IN ALBANY THIS WEEK.

2/19/18-IS GOVERNOR CUOMO'S CONSOLIDATION PLAN CONSTITUTIONAL? SOME LAWMAKERS ARE RAISING NEW QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EFFORT THAT'S PART OF HIS PROPOSED BUDGET. THE PLAN WOULD HAVE COUNTY GOVERNMENT HAMMER OUT SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENTS WITH MUNICIPALITIES AND THEN PUT THE MEASURES TO A VOTE. BUT SOME OFFICIALS SAY THAT VIOLATES THE PRINCIPLE OF HOME RULE, ALLOWING LARGER CITIES AND TOWNS TO DICTATE HOW SMALLER MUNICIPALITIES ARE GOVERNED.

2/19/18-COULD ONLINE POKER SOON BE LEGAL IN NEW YORK? THAT'S WHAT SOME LEGISLATORS IN ALBANY ARE PROPOSING. THEIR MEASURE WOULD LEGALIZE WAGERING ON ONLINE POKER SITES WITH OVERSIGHT FROM THE STATE GAMING COMMISSION. IT'S SIMILAR TO THE COMPROMISE BILL THAT ALLOWED FANTASY SPORTS BETTING IN NEW YORK. REVENUE FROM THE MEASURE, INCLUDING FEES AND A CUT OF ANY JACKPOTS, WOULD BE SPLIT BETWEEN NEW YORK'S GENERAL FUND AND THE STATE'S LICENSED CASINOS.

2/15/18-STATE SENATOR JOE GRIFFO IS RAISING QUESTIONS ABOUT A PLAN TO PROVIDE INMATES ACROSS THE STATE WITH FREE COMPUTER TABLETS. IN A LETTER TO THE STATE CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT HE RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW EASILY INMATES WOULD BE ABLE TO USE THE TABLETS TO PLAN NEW CRIMES VIA EMAIL AND MESSAGING SERVICES. GRIFFO ALSO SAID THE STATE WOULD BE BETTER OFF FOCUSING ON PROVIDING TABLETS TO NEW YORK'S STUDENTS, RATHER THAN INMATES DOING TIME.

2/15/18-GOVERNOR CUOMO'S PROPOSED BUDGET GIVES HIM UNPRECEDENTED POWER OVER STATE SPENDING AND RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY. THAT'S ACCORDING TO A NEW REPORT FROM THE STATE COMPTROLLER. AT ISSUE ARE

PROVISIONS THAT WOULD ALLOW THE GOVERNOR AND HIS BUDGET DIRECTOR TO MAKE CUTS IN PROGRAMS IN RESPONSE TO CHANGES IN FEDERAL FUNDING. THE REPORT SAYS THAT WOULD VIOLATE THE LEGISLATURE'S OVERSIGHT OF STATE EXPENDITURES.

2/13/18-SAY GOODBYE TO THE INCOME TAX AND HELLO TO A PAYROLL TAX. YESTERDAY GOVERNOR CUOMO UNVEILED A PROPOSAL THAT WOULD ALLOW BUSINESSES TO PAY A PAYROLL TAX INSTEAD OF DEDUCTING AN INCOME TAX FROM THEIR EMPLOYEE'S PAYCHECKS. THE MOVE IS DESIGNED TO COUNTER THE CAP ON STATE AND LOCAL TAXES IMPOSED IN LAST YEAR'S FEDERAL TAX OVERHAUL. BUT BUSINESSES ARE TAKING A WAIT AND SEE APPROACH. THE MEASURE STILL HAS TO BE APPROVED BY LEGISLATORS IN ALBANY, AND COULD UNDERGO MAJOR CHANGES.

2/8/18-CLEAN ALL THE SNOW OFF YOUR CAR, OR ELSE. THE STATE LEGISLATURE IS LOOKING AT AT LEAST FOUR BILLS THAT WOULD FINE DRIVERS FOR FAILING TO CLEAN THE SNOW OFF THEIR CARS. CURRENT LAWS ONLY IMPOSE FINES IF DRIVERS HAVE OBSTRUCTED VISION FROM SNOW ON THEIR WINDOWS. BUT THE NEW LAWS WOULD FINE DRIVERS UP TO EIGHT HUNDRED DOLLARS FOR HAVING MORE THAN THREE INCHES OF SNOW ON THEIR VEHICLE. LEGISLATORS SAY THE SNOW BLOWING OFF VEHICLES CAUSES BAD VISIBILITY ON THE ROAD AND CAN POTENTIALLY DAMAGE OTHER CARS.

2/7/18-NEW YORKERS NEED TO BE REMINDED THAT EATING LAUNDRY DETERGENT IS A BAD IDEA. YESTERDAY LEGISLATORS IN ALBANY PROPOSED NEW LEGISLATION CRACKING DOWN ON THE INSIDIOUS THREAT OF LAUNDRY DETERGENT PODS. THE MOVE COMES AFTER HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE ON YOUTUBE RECORDED THEMSELVES EATING A POD AND, TO NO ONE'S SURPRISE, GETTING VIOLENTLY ILL. IN RESPONSE MEMBERS OF BOTH HOUSES WANT STRONGER WARNINGS AND A NEW DESIGN FOR THE PODS SO THEY AREN'T CHEWABLE.

2/6/18-UTICA'S TAX RATE IS SET TO JUMP 7-POINT-8 PERCENT UNDER MAYOR PALMIERI'S LATEST BUDGET. HE UNVEILED THE SPENDING PLAN TO THE CITY'S BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND APPORTIONMENT YESTERDAY AND THEY QUICKLY VOTED TO PASS IT ON TO THE FULL COMMON COUNCIL. PALMIERI BLAMES THE INCREASE ON MANDATED COSTS THAT THE CITY DOESN'T HAVE ANY CONTROL OVER. THAT INCLUDES INCREASES IN SALARIES, MEDICAL INSURANCE, PENSION COSTS, AND THE CITY'S LONG TERM DEBT.

2/6/18-THE CORRUPTION TRIAL OF A FORMER TOP AIDE TO GOVERNOR CUOMO ENTERED IT'S SECOND WEEK WITH SOME DRAMATIC TESTIMONY. JOE PERCOCO IS ACCUSED OF ACCEPTING TENS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS IN BRIBES IN RETURN FOR HELPING COMPANIES WITH BUSINESS BEFORE THE STATE. YESTERDAY HIS FORMER FRIEND AND BUSINESS PARTNER TODD HOWE TESTIFIED ABOUT HAMMERING OUT A DEAL WITH A POWER COMPANY TO HIRE PERCOCO'S WIFE. THE PAIR REFERRED TO THE PAYOFFS AS "ZITI", INSPIRED BY THE MOB DRAMA "THE SOPRANOS".

2/2/18-THOSE I LOVE NEW YORK SIGNS ALONG THE SIDE OF THE ROAD ARE COSTING NEW YORK FOURTEEN MILLION DOLLARS IN FEDERAL AID. SINCE 2013 THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION HAS WARNED NEW YORK THE BILLBOARDS DIDN'T COMPLY WITH FEDERAL STANDARDS. BUT THE CUOMO ADMINISTRATION DUG IN ITS HEELS, AT LEAST UNTIL THIS WEEK. FACING THE LOSS OF A LARGE CHUNK OF FEDERAL AID STATE OFFICIALS HAVE OFFERED TO REMOVE 4-HUNDRED OF THE OVER FIVE-HUNDRED SIGNS.

2/1/18-EVERY INMATE IN NEW YORK'S PRISONS WILL BE GETTING A TABLET COMPUTER. THAT'S ONE OF THE MEASURES INCLUDED IN A NEW CONTRACT SIGNED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS WITH A COMMISSARY COMPANY CALLED J-PAY. THEY'LL PROVIDE THE TABLETS AT NO COST, AND INMATES WILL THEN BE ABLE TO ORDER MUSIC, BOOKS, AND MOVIES USING THE DEVICES. J-PAY WILL GET THE REVENUE FROM THOSE DOWNLOADS. OFFICIALS SAY THE CONTRACT WILL HELP CUT DOWN ON ILLEGAL CONTRABAND BEING SMUGGLED INTO PRISONS.