

## OUR WORK

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Tuesday, August 30, 2022

### State

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Updated October 29, 2025

Have you taken action based on our suggestions? We'd love to hear about it!

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### Arts Funding

#### New York State Budget Finalized for 2026 Fiscal Year

After a long negotiation process, the New York State Budget passed in mid-May, over a month past its deadline. The final budget includes key affordability measures such as the launch of the Housing Access Voucher Program. Notably, it also determines funding for the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), a vital source of financial support for arts and culture organizations statewide.

In response to Governor Hochul's initial proposal to cut NYSCA's budget by nearly a third, Dance/NYC joined sector leaders in calling for \$200 million in funding. The final budget allocates approximately \$172 million—a modest decrease of less than 2% from last year. While this year's state budget reflects some stability, broader national trends of funding insecurity for the arts and culture sector highlight the continued need for strong and sustained public investment at the state and local level.

- [Review coverage on what's in the Fiscal Year 2026 state budget](#)
- [Learn more about the New York State Council on the Arts](#)

#### Culturally Diverse Arts Funding

[S115A](#) / [A2607](#) would increase access to resources for culturally diverse arts and culture organizations that advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion, racial and social justice, and cultural preservation. The bill grants the state council on the arts the power to stimulate and encourage the study and presentation of cultural preservation and development, racial and social justice, and performing and fine arts across the state. Additionally, it authorizes the council to accept gifts and contributions to further the educational and equity objectives of the council's programs.

- [Contact your representatives](#) in support of culturally diverse arts funding

#### Cultural Districts

[S1062](#) / [A7737](#) would direct the State Council on the Arts to establish criteria and guidelines for the establishment of state designated arts and cultural districts that receive state support through technical assistance, marketing expertise, and identification of applicable state resources.

#### History, Arts and Culture Levy

[A1758](#) / [S2553](#) would authorize municipalities to establish a history, arts, and culture levy and exempt this levy from the real property tax levy limit.

### Space For Dance

#### NYC Arts Space Act

The New York City Arts Space Act ([S1077](#) / [A50](#)) would expand an existing tax credit designed to encourage the conversion of office spaces to affordable housing. Under this proposal, a portion of these buildings would include arts spaces with rents capped at \$20 per square foot. Dance/NYC expressed its support for the legislation at a press conference at the Bushwick Starr in October 2024. In March 2025, NYC Council [passed a resolution](#) in support of the state legislation.

- [Contact your state representatives](#) to support this bill
- [Review the bill text of the New York City Arts Space Act](#)
- [Check out Playbill's coverage of the New York City Arts Space Act press conference](#)

### Arts Education

#### Arts as a Core Subject

[A6490B](#) / [S6318A](#) would make arts education a part of the core curriculum for public school students. This opens the door for increased access to funding, inclusive curriculum design, the establishment of partnerships with local artists and arts organizations, and other opportunities.

- [Contact your state representatives](#) to support this bill.

## Arts Requirements Compliance

[S1072](#) would direct the state education commissioner to require public school districts to report on compliance with art education instruction requirements. This bill has passed in the Senate and is now in committee in the Assembly.

## Arts in Pre-K

[S6678](#) would incorporate art and music into prekindergarten programs.

## Arts Workforce

### Minimum Wage

[New York's minimum wage has increased](#) for three years with subsequent increases tied to inflation. On January 1, 2024, the minimum wage increased to \$16 in New York City and the counties of Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester, and to \$15 in all other parts of the State.

- [Review press release on historic agreement to raise NY minimum wage](#)
- [Learn more about New York State's minimum wage](#)
- [Check out history of New York State minimum wage](#)

### Unemployment Bridge

[S173](#) / [A3582](#) would establish an [Unemployment Bridge Program](#) and fund to provide wage replacement to workers who do not qualify for unemployment insurance or other worker wage assistance programs and who have lost a major source of income due to lost work.

- [Sign the petition](#) from the Fund Excluded Workers Coalition.

### Freelance isn't Free

In fall 2023, Governor Kathy Hochul signed into law the "[Freelance Isn't Free](#)" Act ([S.5026/A.6040](#)) to provide freelance workers certain protections regarding contracts and timely payments. This is a statewide version of legislation [enacted in New York City in 2017](#).

- Review the [full text](#) of "Freelance Isn't Free" Act.

### Secure Savings for Freelancers

In January 2024, New York Passed the [Secure Savings Program for Freelancers](#) ([S2399](#) / [A4529](#)), which authorizes freelancers and self-employed individuals the option of enrolling in a secure choice savings program.

## Healthcare

### New York Health Act

[The New York Health Act](#) ([S3425](#) / [A1466](#)) proposes to provide comprehensive health coverage for every resident or full-time worker in New York.

- [Learn more and take action to support](#) the Campaign for New York Health.
- [Sign the Petition](#) for the New York Health Act
- [Sign up to Receive Updates](#) from the Campaign for New York Health

### Coverage For All

Coverage For All ([S3762](#) / [A1710](#)) would expand health care coverage to New York residents regardless of their immigration status. The measure would create a state-funded health coverage option for New York state residents who earn up to 200% of the federal poverty line and include undocumented residents.

## Arts in Mental Health

[S1001](#) / [A3319](#) would amend insurance law to include outpatient care provided by creative-arts therapists in certain insurance policies covering care for other mental health services. This bill has passed in both the Senate and Assembly.

## Nonprofit Organizations

### Nonprofit Lobbying Requirements

[S2224A](#) would raise the nonprofit and individual "lobbying threshold" to \$10,000 to relieve grassroots organizations from the administrative burden of registering as lobbyists before weighing in on legislation. This bill has passed in the Senate and is in committee in the Assembly.

- Review Nonprofit New York's [policy briefing](#)

## Immigration

### New York for All

The New York for All Act would prohibit all local law enforcement and state agencies from conspiring with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP). This includes preventing local law enforcement from enforcing federal immigration laws, limiting ICE and CBP access to state and local property, and increasing government data protections.

- [Learn more about the New York for All Act](#)
- [Contact your representatives to support the New York for All Act](#)

## Dignity not Detention

The NY Dignity Not Detention Act would end immigrant detention in New York State. It would prohibit anyone from owning or operating immigrant detention facilities in New York State and require the termination of any government contracts with immigration detention centers.

- [Check out the campaign for the NY Dignity Not Detention Act](#)
- [Take action to support NY Dignity Not Detention](#)

## Anti-Discrimination

### Equal Rights Amendment Passed

In the General election on November 5, 2024, New Yorkers voted to pass Proposal 1, also known as the New York Equal Rights Amendment. The passage of Proposal 1 codifies a variety of protections in the New York State Constitution, including for ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, sex, LGBTQ identity, pregnancy, and reproductive healthcare.

Having these protections can serve as an important legal tool to defend against legislative attacks on our communities. Amid an election that threatens many marginalized communities across the country, the passage of Prop 1 serves as a bright spot and necessary protection.

- [Learn more about the New York Equal Rights Amendment](#)
- [Review the language of Proposal One](#)
- [Scan Gothamist coverage on Proposal One passing](#)

## Disability Justice

### Wage Equity for Disabled Workers

[S28B](#) / [A1006A](#) would eliminate provisions exempting employees with disabilities from the minimum wage law and provides that laws or minimum wage orders that authorize an employer to pay a wage that is less than the minimum wage are valid provided that under such laws or orders an employee with a disability is paid the same wage as an employee in a comparable position that does not have a disability.

### Disability Insurance Rates

[S661](#) / [A830](#) would prohibit the imposition of different premium rates for disability insurance based on gender. The bill passed the Senate, and is now in the Insurance Committee in the Assembly.

### Mask Bans

The FY26 State Budget included a rule that allows prosecutors to request harsher penalties for someone who commits a misdemeanor while wearing a mask. This follows Nassau County passing the nation's first mask ban in August 2024, making wearing a facial covering in public a misdemeanor punishable by a fine up to \$1,000 (with exceptions for health, religious, and cultural purposes). Both Governor Hochul and Mayor Adams have publicly expressed support for a ban on masks on the New York City subway. However, these bans have been widely criticized.

Mask bans and restrictions are a dangerous attack on the bodily autonomy of all New Yorkers. They put disabled and immunocompromised people at risk of contracting COVID-19 and other illnesses. They open the door for racial and religious profiling and increased criminalization of marginalized people. Upholding the right to wear masks and other facial coverings is vital to protect disabled, BIPOC, immigrant, and other marginalized communities.

- [Review The People's CDC's Response to the state budget mask rule](#)
- [Review NYCLU's 'Know Your Rights' Guide to masking in Nassau County](#)
- [Explore Long Covid Justice's resource list on resisting mask bans](#)
- [Learn more about Governor Hochul's statements on mask bans](#)

## Artificial Intelligence

### RAISE Act Passes New York State Legislature

A new law regulating large artificial intelligence companies passed the New York State legislature. Now, all it needs to go into effect is to be signed into law by Governor Hochul. The RAISE Act sets up some baseline AI safeguards by requiring the largest AI companies to publish and follow safety protocols for the most severe AI risks. It protects whistleblowers in these companies, requires companies to have a third party auditor, and allows the state to penalize companies that fail to comply.

The RAISE Act represents a first action towards responsible governance of AI development. While it only mitigates the most severe risks by the largest companies, it may signal increased political will on this issue.

- [Learn more about the RAISE Act](#)
- [Review the bill text of the RAISE Act](#)