QUEENS TODAY
OCTOBER 4, 2023

POLICE ARE SEARCHING FOR A SUSPECT who allegedly hit a woman several times with an umbrella at a Sunnyside subway station last week, PIX 11 reports. A 34-year-old woman was standing on the platform at the 46th Street-Bleecker Street station around 4 p.m. when she saw an argument between two people, and tried to intervene. The suspect began arguing with her and then the verbal dispute became physical, with the suspect hitting the woman several times with an umbrella before fleeing on foot. The woman suffered minor injuries and refused medical care. The NYPD released a description of the suspect, who was last seen wearing a green hat and brown jacket with a camouflage shirt underneath.

AFTER WIDESPREAD FLOODING in Queens on Friday, residents are picking up the pieces and asking for more by way of infrastructure, FOX 5 reports. John Sledge, a Laurel Hill resident, says that he spent more than $200,000 in renovations after Hurricane Ida in 2021, and his house is now in ruins again. “This second section of the fence was all blown in; we had to fix it last night,” Sledge told FOX. The Laurel Hill man says when the rain began, more and more water started accumulating and quickly flooded the basement. Sledge blames storm drains for part of the issue. “The drains, the drains,” Sledge said. “They got to be doing something about the drains. This can’t be going on.”

HARVARD PLAYGROUND IN HOLLIS got a nearly $3 million boost this week after it was wrecked by Hurricane Ida, A.B.C. 7 reports. The money came from the office of local Councilmember Nadashia Williams. “Every step we take toward enhancing our community contributes to the overall advancement of our district,” she said. “Harvard Playground is not just a space for recreation; it’s a symbol of our commitment to progress and our determination to address the needs of our neighbors.” Williams described the park restoration as a product of collaboration between government and community.

THE ACCUSATION THAT AN ASYLUM seeker sexually assaulted a young girl at a Far Rockaway migrant shelter has been deemed unfounded by police, law enforcement sources told amNY. The accusation, which was first reported by the New York Post on Thursday, involved a 7-year-old girl — also a migrant herself — and a 34-year-old man who allegedly molested her inside the Hotel Minist Brent on Beach 22nd Street shelter. Police say the event the Post reported was likely a fabrication, and that after an investigation it was determined that the man was telling the truth when he said he was not at the location during the time the crime occurred. Police also discovered video of the girl playing in the building’s hallway at the time the alleged assault was said to have happened.

QUEENS DAILY EAGLE

Oversight board urges city to recommit to Rikers closure plan

By Jacob Kaye
Queens Daily Eagle

The watchdog group charged with keeping tabs on New York City’s jails says that the city needs to “recommit” to its plan to shutter Rikers Island, which has seen its average daily population grow by nearly 1,000 detainees in the past two years.

In a four-page report released quietly last week, the Board of Correction said that while the city has made serious strides toward closing Rikers Island, recent trends suggest the city needs to refocus its efforts on reducing the infamous jail’s population and building the four new jails in Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Manhattan to replace Rikers by 2027, the city’s legally-mandated deadline for the jail’s closure.

In the BOC’s report, the citizen oversight board celebrated that the jail complex’s average daily population had been reduced by around 4,800 detainees since 2017, the first year the city committed to closing Rikers Island. But after declining for years, Rikers’ population has been steadily increasing since May 2020, a trend city officials have said they only expect to continue.

That could pose a major problem for the city’s borough-based jails plan. Together, the city’s borough-based jails are expected to be able to detain 3,300 people at a time. As of September, there were around 6,200 people being held in the city’s jail complex, according to Department of Correction data.

“We are encouraged by the city’s progress in reducing the jail population from nearly 11,000 in 2017 to less than 6,200 in August 2023,” the Board of Correction said in its status report on the city’s jail closure plan. “However, we strongly urge all stakeholders to recommit to reducing the jail population safely, to less than half of the current population, which would bring it below the borough-based jails plan’s maximum capacity of 3,300 people.”

“Conditions are dire on Rikers Island and change is needed soon,” the board added.

Both Mayor Eric Adams and Department of Correction Commissioner Joseph Ponte have said that closing Rikers will be a top priority in their administrations.

By Ryan Schwuch
Queens Daily Eagle

Mayor Eric Adams and several top officials in his administration will leave New York on Wednesday for several Latin American countries, where he won’t be talking about the merits of New York City, but rather trying to convince potential migrants that if they come to the Big Apple, they might not get what they are looking for.

In what could be called a reverse tourism campaign, Adams and other officials will be venturing to Mexico, Ecuador and Colombia — nations where large numbers of migrants arriving in New York City in the past year have come from — in order to articulate to would-be migrants that New York City no longer has the opportunities or resources they might have hoped for.

A dams discussed the trip alongside several of his commissioners and deputy mayors on Tuesday at the first of a new series of off-topic media availability sessions, and took questions from reporters on the details of the trip and what he hopes to accomplish south of the border.

See story on page 2
Mayor to make trip south to assess migrant crisis

By Ryan Schwach
Queens Daily Eagle

Queens Borough President Donovan Richards announced Tuesday that his office is bringing back the Queens Tech + Innovation Challenge for a second year after what he called a successful inaugural season.

Last year, the QTIC, which partners with the Queens Economic Development Corporation, awarded $20,000 in seed funding to five local start-up companies with the goal of empowering local Queens businesses in the tech industry.

The multi-month competition for funding includes classes, mentorship and networking opportunities that help prospective businesses eventually pitch their projects in the spring.

“I’ve never been more confident in Queens’ future as a true incubator of innovation and a global leader in tech,” Richards said. “With the return of the QTIC, we’re taking a second giant leap toward realizing that immense potential by further investing some of the most ingenious minds in our borough.”

Richards encouraged New Yorkers with ideas on how to make their business grow in Queens to apply.

“If you have a bright idea for a new business that you want to grow, here in Queens, I strongly encourage you to apply and utilize the tools at hand — and funding waiting to be won — to help your vision come true,” he said.

The QTIC works by dividing projects into five categories: Consumer Tech, Enterprise Tech, Sustainability, Community, and Food-Based. Ultimately, one project will be selected out of each category.

Last year’s competition included a local Malayan-gourmet pantry company, a bookshop that highlights authors of color, a waste management operations entity, an analytical software entity and a youth engagement platform.

“Entrepreneurs provide new services and products, create jobs and pay taxes. And in Queens, they’re the bedrock of the economy,” said Queens Economic Development Corporation Executive Director Seth Bornstein.

“Thus, we’re excited to expand and import the time-honored QTIC program this year, encouraging budding entrepreneurs to register and participate. You’ll definitely learn a lot, in addition to potentially earning important funding.”

To participate, interested individuals must complete an intake form and a 2-page application between Oct. 3, and March 1. Along with the application, interested Queens residents must submit a video pitch of up to three minutes long for their plan, as well as a three-year financial projection.

All individuals must be from Queens and over the age of 18, and also must attend a minimum of four online workshops hosted by QEDC, among other criteria, in order to apply.

In Spring 2024, 15 finalists will be selected — three from each category — to participate in Pitch Day, with each finalist pitching their start-up to a panel of judges.

Queens BP relaunches Queens tech competition

Queens Borough President Donovan Richards announced Tuesday that his office is relaunching the Queens Tech + Innovation competition for a second year.

Adams focuses on QEDC initiatives

Mayor Eric Adams hopes to visit the Darien Gap, a common migrant traffic route, to assess the migration issue himself.

Mayor to make trip south to assess migrant crisis

Continued from page 1

“We’re going to tell them that coming to New York doesn’t mean you’re going to stay in a five-star hotel,” A dams said on Tuesday. “It doesn’t mean that the mere fact you come here you automatically are going to be allowed to work.”

The four-day trip begins on Wednesday, and has a few goals in mind, including checking out the Darien Gap, the area where Central America meets South America. The Darien Gap is a common route for South American immigrants to make their way north.

“I want to see what’s happening in the Darien Gap to see what that flow looks like,” A dams said. “I was told by the rural leaders who came here during [United Nations General Assembly] that there is a heavy flow that’s comin- through.”

A dams says that he needs “to go on the ground” to see to the flow of migrants him- self, and called an earlier trip he made to El Paso in January “eye opening.”

“I have to see what’s taking place,” he said.

The mayor said that he also wants to speak to individuals in the countries he’ll be visiting to try to articulate to them that the situation in New York is not as welcoming as they may have imagined, as housing options become more and more scarce.

“I want to give the people of those areas a real story of what is happening in New York City,” he said. “There is a public relation campa- gned that people are using in these areas to state that if you are in New York, that you’re going to get whatever you need…I want to give them a true picture of what’s taking place.”

“There’s a body of people that are there that are giving them false hopes and false promis- es,” he added.

According to A dams, the trip will apparent- ly be self-funded, and will not be paid for with taxpayer money. The N Y P D officers expected to accompany the mayor on the trip, however, will be paid with taxpayer funds.

“We should be clear, this could be done on the QTIC program this year, en- thusiastically,” said Murad Awaw- deh, the executive director of NYIC.

“Thus, we’re excited to expand and improve the QTIC program this year, en- thusiastically,” said Murad Awaw- deh, the executive director of NYIC.

“Some groups, including the New York Im- migration Coalition, are already criticizing the trip, saying that it is a waste of time.”

If Mayor A dams really wants to learn more about the arduous journeys of asylum seekers seeking safety, he should spend a little more time speaking with them or organizations on the ground serving them,” said M urad Awaw- deh, the executive director of NYIC.

“The list of delays and mismanagement in easing the burden on our shelter system is a

Mayor to make trip south to assess migrant crisis

long one — and something that this administra- tion should prioritize,” Awawdeh added. “M ayor A dams has no authority to affect any interna- tional policy changes, making this travel even more ridiculous. You need to be living under a rock to not know how asylum seekers are com- ing to the United States. We suggest that M ayor A dams focus on his work here in our greatness.”

Meanwhile, back on the homefront, officials said Tuesday that the migrant crisis has not im- proved.

“I can’t believe that we’re still in this situa- tion that we are talking about how many more sites we want to open,” said Deputy Mayor

Anne Williams-Ism.

“We have 118,000 people that have come to New York City. This is a na- tional and an international crisis, and so I am frustrated that we are still talking about what’s happening.”

Williams-Ism again called for a nation- wide decompression strategy, a call that has so far gone unanswered.

“I’m concerned, about families with chil- dren,” she said. “I’m concerned about the people that are coming here…It’s not good to raise your children in a hotel room, and everyone seems to think that that’s okay, and you’re asking how many more hotel rooms we’re going to need.”

The administration also said that the state and city are moving forward in the opening of the Floyd Bennett Field migrant shelter, which is separately facing a legal challenge brought by a group of Republican and Democratic law- makers.

Mayor to make trip south to assess migrant crisis

Continued from page 1

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“We should be clear, this could be done on taxpayer dime, let’s be clear on that,” he said.

“Taxpayers can pay for this trip. We made the determination that during these tough fiscal
Dear Readers,

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Jen Hopewell,
Assistant to the Publisher
jdh@brooklyneagle.com
Brooklyn conviction review unit wants to ‘correct mistakes’ quicker — but still silencing cases

By Reuven Blau
THE CITY

Derrick Hamilton, who was exonerated on murder charges after spending over 20 years in prison, speaks at a rally Monday outside City Hall. Oct. 2, 2023.

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Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez talks to Charles Lineman, the head of the Conviction Review Unit, during a court hearing in March. Courtesy of the Brooklyn District Attorney’s Office.

David Herion has been waiting for nearly three years to clear his name — after more than three decades in state prison for an attempted murder.

Herion’s case is one of 36 pending before Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez’s Conviction Review Unit, known as the CRU, including one that has dragged on for eight years.

But Herion, whose 45-year prison sentence was commuted by Gov. Kathy Hochul last month after THE CITY highlighted that his victim was even pushing for a pardon, can’t speak on the status of his case, because of a cooperation agreement people have to enter before the CRU will consider their case.

“Mr. Herion didn’t commit the crime,” said his lawyer, Kathryn Szymborski, Wolfkit of the MacArthur Justice Center.

“The governor recently commented his sentence based on an application that highlighted his innocence, but true justice won’t be done until he’s been exonerated,” she added, saying he’s “grateful” the CRU is “reviewing his conviction” and “dedicated to righting past wrongs.”

The Brooklyn CRU was one of the first in the nation and has been used as a model for others in the city and throughout the country. Since its total redesign in 2014, it has recommended the exoneration of more people — 35 — than any similar division, according to Oren Yairi, a spokesperson for Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez.

But the number of exonerations initially slowed. Under Thompson’s leadership, the unit opened 27 cases related to disgraced former NYPD detective Louis Scarcella, who retired in 1999. Despite numerous official findings of bad practices, including misleading a jury in one case, Scarcella has never been criminally charged or faced any other formal sanctions.

Since then, the unit has been left with more complex filings reliant on new evidence, witnesses, and accusations of prosecutorial “tunnel vision” — zeroing in on the wrong person while ignoring other possible leads, according to Lineman.

“These are deep dive investigations and they take a lot of work,” said Lineman.

Sworn to Secrecy

The first step is identifying which cases they agree to take on.

That process involves Lineman and two deputies who review each application to make sure it meets a basic bar.

To start, they determine if whatever argument is being made would lead to a possible exoneration. If yes, they then determine whether there’s a legitimate investigative path to figure out whether the facts each petitioner is pointing to about their case are true.

“It keeps out kind of the cases that we’re going to spin our wheels for a long time and get nowhere and waste a lot of time when we could be working on a real viable case where someone is locked up,” Lineman said.

The CRU prioritizes cases filed by people who are currently in prison, he noted.

Before lawyers in the DA unit begin a new probe, attorneys for the defendants are asked to sign so-called “cooperation agreements.” That deal makes all documents and witness interviews and any other newly uncovered information “confidential” until the review is complete. Critics of the process say this step muzzles defense lawyers who might criticize the process, and contributes to some of the long delays.

“It’s a nondisclosure agreement,” said one deputy.

Most lawyers with cases before the unit have been reluctant to speak about it, including representatives at the Legal Aid and the Innocence Project.

Fiona Guthrie, chief spokesperson for the Innocence Project, declined to discuss the unit.

“Thank you for the invitation and for thinking of us but we are going to pass at this point,” she told THE CITY, adding the organization couldn’t talk because staff had “competing priorities.”

Yairi, the DA’s chief spokesperson, defended the agreements.

“I think it’s completely sensible that if we work in cooperation, you won’t go to a third party to exert pressure on me,” he said, noting defense lawyers can share information with the press after the reviews are complete.

A Snail’s Pace

As part of the CRU process, staff try to interview witnesses in person, which can sometimes take multiple attempts — and also involve travel, according to Lineman.

The unit’s longest running open case has taken eight years and counting largely due to a new criminal investigation it has triggered, Lineman said.

The next longest case, which has taken three years so far, involves a person who was released from prison in 2004, he added. That person, Brian Kellum, was reported to Guyana the same year, records show.

The longest case ever seems to be the one involving three teen defendants who were all convicted of pouring gasoline into a subway token booth slot and then lighting a book of matches on Nov. 26, 1995.

The booth clerk, Harry Kuffman, 50, caught fire and died two weeks later.

For the three defendants — Vincent Ellerbe, James Irons and Malik — argued for years that their clients were coerced into confessing by overly aggressive Brooklyn detectives, including Scarcella, who has been tied to multiple other exonerations.

The CRU took a decade before deciding to exonerate the men in July 2022, two of whom were still in state prison at the time. The case dragged on so long it extended the tenure of three Brooklyn DAs.

Kuby, who represented Malik, said it was an “extremely difficult case” and “extraordinarily complicated given all the things done so catastrophically wrong.”

He can appreciate that the CRU wanted to make sure that “every stone was looked under” because it was such a high-profile murder, Kuby said.

“These guys spent an additional 30 years behind bars that they should not have,” he said of the time they collectively spent waiting while the CRU’s probe dragged on, calling it an “outrage.”

Former Brooklyn DA Charles Hynes — who originally launched the CRU in 2011 with a staff of one — didn’t take nearly as long to bring the original case that convicted them, Vincent Ellerbe’s older sister, Evelyn, told THE CITY.

“They lost their whole lives. They had no childhood,” she said.

Her brother was 17 when he was arrested and interrogated by police without his mother in the room. They all later argued they were forced to confess by over-aggressive detectives, including Scarcella, who overheard the probe.

Criminal justice activists are still pushing for legislation that would mandate minor talks with a lawyer before they waive their so-called Miranda rights and speak with detectives. The proposed measure — which did not gain enough traction in Albany last legislative session — would also require officials to make every effort to contact parents or guardians before a child can be moved from the score of an arrest.

As for Herion, he’s set to be released from Sing Sing Correctional Facility on Oct. 10. He and his co-defendant, Michael Ploomoy, have long maintained their innocence.

Herion said he was visiting his friend in the hospital when the shooting occurred. That friend has twice sworn in affidavits that Herion was at the hospital at that time.

While his case is being probed by the CRU, the Brooklyn DA supported his clemency application with Hochul, the spokesperson Yairi said.

The overall conviction review is ongoing, he added.

As for Kellum, he and his co-defendants were happy the CRU exonerated them last year but they worry about other people still being held bars waiting for a verdict.

“There’s a lot of guys that are still in there,” he told THE CITY, “but [the CRU is] moving at a snail’s pace.”

“No to say that they are not good,” he added, “because had it not been for that unit being formed a lot of these cases wouldn’t even be looked at.”

THE CITY is an independent, nonprofit news outlet dedicated to hard-hitting reporting that serves the people of New York.
Climate Change Is About To Play A Big Role In Gov’t Purchases

With Vast Implications For The American Economy

By Jessica Burkhardt and Lauren Gifford
THE CONVERSATION

Each year, the federal government purchases about 50,000 new vehicles. Until recently, almost all of them ran on diesel or gasoline, contributing to U.S. demand for fossil fuels and encouraging automakers to continue focusing on fossil-fueled vehicles.

That’s starting to change, and a new directive that the Biden Administration quietly issued in September 2023 will accelerate the shift.

The administration directed U.S. agencies to begin considering the social cost of greenhouse gases when making purchase decisions and implementing their budgets.

That one move has vast implications that go far beyond vehicles. It could affect decisions across the government on everything from agriculture grants to fossil fuel drilling on public lands to construction projects. Ultimately, it could shift demand enough to change what industries produce, not just for the government but for the entire country.

What’s the social cost of greenhouse gases?

The social cost of greenhouse gases represents the damage created by emitting 1 metric ton of carbon dioxide, methane and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

These greenhouse gases, largely from fossil fuels, trap heat in the atmosphere, warming the planet and fueling climate change. The result is worsening storms, heat waves, droughts and other disasters that harm humans, infrastructure and economies around the world.

The estimate is intended to include changes in agricultural productivity, human health, property damage from increased flood risk, and the value of ecosystem services.

By directing agencies to consider those costs when making purchases and implementing budgets, the administration is making it more likely that agencies will purchase products and make investments that are more energy-efficient and less likely to fuel climate change.

Brooklyn students protested climate change in 2019 with a rally at Brooklyn Borough Hall.

While only a fraction of the roughly $6 trillion that the U.S. government spends each year would likely be considered under the new directive, that fraction could have far-reaching impacts on the U.S. economy by reducing demand for fossil fuels and lowering emissions across sectors.

Estimating the cost

The Obama administration introduced the first federal social cost of carbon to incorporate climate risk in regulatory decisions. It’s calculated using models of the global economy and climate and weights the value of spending money today for future benefits.

When the Trump administration arrived, it cut the estimated cost from around $50 per metric ton to less than $5, which justified rolling back several environmental regulations, including on power plant emissions and fuel efficiency. The Biden administration restored an interim price to about $51, with plans to raise it.

Recent research suggests that the actual social cost of carbon is closer to $185 per metric ton. But carbon dioxide is just one greenhouse gas. The new directive takes other greenhouse gases into consideration, too — in particular, methane, which has about 80 times the warming power of carbon dioxide over 20 years.

Estimates of the social cost of methane, which comes from livestock and leaks from pipelines and other natural gas equipment, range from $933 per metric ton to $4,000 per metric ton.

Without directives like these, decision-makers implicitly set the cost of greenhouse gas emissions to zero in their benefit-cost analyses. The new directives allow agencies to instead compare the expected climate damages, in dollars, when making decisions about vehicle purchases, building infrastructure and permitting, among other choices.

The vehicle fleet as an example

The federal vehicle fleet is a good example of how the social costs of greenhouse gases add up.

Let’s compare the costs of driving an electric Ford Focus and an equivalent conventional-fuel Ford Focus.

While each vehicle drives an average of 10,000 miles (about 16,000 kilometers) per year — that’s less than the U.S. average per driver, but it’s a simple number to work with. The damages from emissions in dollars from driving a conventional Ford Focus 10,000 miles are between $133 and $484, depending on whether you use a social cost of carbon of $51 per metric ton or $185 per metric ton.

The climate harm from driving an equivalent electric Ford Focus 10,000 miles, based on the average carbon dioxide emissions intensity from the U.S. electricity grid, would be between $59 and $212, using the same social costs.

Scale that to 50,000 new vehicle purchases, and that’s a cost difference of about $4 million to $13.5 million per year for emissions from operating the vehicles. While producing an EV’s battery adds to the vehicle’s emissions up front, that’s soon outweighed by operational savings. These are real savings to society.

Much of the U.S. government is also a major consumer of energy. If agencies begin to consider the climate damages associated with fossil energy consumption, they will likely trend toward renewable energy, further lowering their own emissions while boosting the burgeoning industry.

How the government can shift demand

These types of comparisons under the new directive could help shift purchases toward a wider range of less carbon-intensive products.

Much of the U.S. government’s spending goes toward carbon-intensive goods and services, such as transportation and infrastructure development. Directing agencies to consider and compare the social cost of purchases in each of these sectors will send similar signals to different segments of the market. The demand for less carbon-intensive goods is rising.

Because this new directive expands to other greenhouse gases, it could have broad implications for new permitting for oil and gas development and agricultural production, as these are the two largest sources of methane in the U.S.

While this decision is not a tax on carbon or a subsidy for less carbon-intensive goods, it will likely send similar market signals. With respect to purchases, this policy is akin to tax rebates for energy-efficient products, like electric vehicle incentives in the Inflation Reduction Act, which boost demand for EVs.

Ultimately, if one of the largest segments of demand, the U.S. government, transitions to less carbon-intensive products, supply will follow.

Jessica Burkhardt is an associate professor of energy economics at Colorado State University. Lauren Gifford is an associate director of the Soil Carbon Solutions Center at Colorado State University.
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**Finally! Liberty Advance Past Sun**

**New York reaches first WNBA title series since 2002**

By John Torenli, Sports Editor

The New York Liberty spent the winter collecting two of the league's top free agents, Breanna Stewart and Courtney Vandersloot, and acquiring a former Most Valuable Player, Jonquel Jones, via trade in the hopes of reaching their first WNBA Finals since 2002.

Mission accomplished!

But plenty more to do if the Liberty want to hoist their first-ever WNBA championship trophy later this month. Stewart scored 27 points, Jones added 25 points and 15 rebounds and Betnijah Laney added 21 points as New York held on for a dramatic 87-84 Game 4 win Sunday to close out its semifinal series with Connecticut in front of 8,196 fans at Mohegan Sun Arena.

The Liberty signed Stewart and Vandersloot to cap their offseason haul, which began with the three-team swap that landed Jones here in Brooklyn.

Jonquel Jones roars with delight along with Breanna Stewart and Betnijah Laney as the Liberty advanced to the WNBA Finals Sunday.

Breanna Stewart won MVP honors and led the Liberty to their first WNBA Finals appearance since 2002.

The Aces completed a three-game sweep of Dallas Friday in their semifinal series, setting up exactly what many had anticipated before the opening tip of this first-ever 40-game WNBA campaign.

The Finals will open in Sin City on Sunday.

Before then, however, the Liberty get to relish reaching the league’s “Super Teams” and a preseason favorite to meet reigning WNBA champion Las Vegas in the Finals.

The Finals will shift back to Brooklyn for Game 3 on Sunday, Oct. 1. Game 4 will also be in Vegas on Wednesday, Oct. 11. The series will shift back to Brooklyn for Game 3 on Sunday, Oct. 15.

Congratulations to Jonquel Jones, who combined with Stewart to power to the basket throughout the finale, drew a foul and drained a pair from the line before stealing a pass and getting to the stripe again for two made free throws.

“JJ has been amazing, so we continue to make sure we’re throwing the ball into her,” Brondello gushed. “But it wasn’t just in the post-ups. It was the big 3s and the free throws, so well done.”

Jones made another free throw with 29 ticks remaining before Tyasha Harris hit a 25-footer to pull Connecticut within 84-81 with 18.1 left on the clock.

Laney made 1-of-2 on New York’s ensuing trip before stealing a pass and getting to the stripe throughout the finale, drew a foul and drained a pair to cut within 84-81 with 18.1 left on the clock.

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Jones made another free throw with 29 ticks remaining before Tyasha Harris hit a 25-footer to pull Connecticut within 84-81 with 18.1 left on the clock.

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Photo: Vianney Le Caer/AP


Photo: Mark Schiefelbein/AP

MEXICO — Demonstrators leave a message in fire, and destroy private property: Demonstrators attempt to torch a store after a march to mark the 55th anniversary of the killings of student protesters at Tlatelolco plaza when soldiers opened fire on a peaceful demonstration, in Mexico City, Monday.

Photo: Eduardo Verdugo/AP

NEW YORK — The story of a life, emerging from courthouse, fighting with press: Former President Donald Trump speaks with journalists during a midday break from court proceedings, Monday, as he attended the start of a civil trial in a lawsuit that already has resulted in a judge ruling that he committed fraud in his business dealings.

Photo: Craig Ruttle/AP
ISRAEL — Colorfully dressed casual observer in contrast to fervent worshippers: Covered in prayer shawls, Jewish men take part in priestly blessing during the weeklong holiday of Sukkot in front of the Western Wall, the holiest site where Jews can pray in Jerusalem’s Old City, Monday. Photo: Ohad Zwigenberg/AP

CHINA — Ready to hit the water: South Korea’s Woo Haram competes in the Diving Men’s 3m Springboard Final during the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, Tuesday. Photo: Aaron Favila/AP

ARGENTINA — All football fan devotion is local: Fans of the Boca Juniors soccer team wave a flag featuring the club’s Vice President Juan Ramon Riquelme, who is a former player with the team, during a local tournament soccer match with River Plate at La Bombonera stadium in Buenos Aires, Sunday. Photo: Gustavo Garello/AP

CHINA — Unique perspective on the completion of a pole vault: China’s Sun Qihao competes during the men’s decathlon pole vault 159 at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, Tuesday. Photo: Lee Jin-man/AP
Erie Adams ordered NYC schools to shelter in place due to flooding. No one told principals.

By Michael Elen-Rooney, Amy Zimmer
and Alex Zimmerman

Chaokkeat

As a flood waste rose Friday in many parts of New York City, the message seemed cut short.

“If you are at work or school, shelter in place for now,” said Mayor Eric Adams during a press conference just before noon that day. Schools Chancellor David Banks repeated that language later in the briefing, explaining “our protocol is in fact to shelter in place.” A tweet at 12:16 p.m. from the Education Department said the same.

Sheltering in place refers to a specific Education Department safety protocol that requires schools to shut their front doors, barring anyone from coming in or out. The procedure is meant to keep schools safe when there’s a danger outside the building.

At 1:56 p.m., a top Education Department official sent principals that the “shelter in place has been lifted,” according to a copy of the email obtained by Chalkbeat.

There was just one problem: No one directly told schools about the order in the first place.

The email was the first Education Department communication that appeared in principals’ inboxes.

That was when Anna Nelson, an assistant principal at Bronx Latin, learned of the shelter-in-place directive.

But enforcing it would have been complicated. Many parents at her 6-12 school showed up early asking to pick up their children, fearing their commutes would be even harder later in the day. That would not have been allowed under a typical shelter-in-place order.

“Parents would have been really upset,” Nelson said. “It would have been wild.”

During previous shelter-in-place situations involving many schools, such as one for several Brooklyn schools after the subway shooting in Sunset Park last year, orders came from the NYPD and borough safety offices contacting schools.

But no such directives arrived Friday, 10 school administrators told Chalkbeat.

Flooding causes chaos in many schools

Many school leaders were dealing with immediate crises. They were helping kids dry off and scavenging up extra clothes for kids who were soaked through, while moving some children out of water-logged classrooms. They were enraging floors weren’t dangerously slippery and figuring out if they had enough teachers to cover classes.

They were communicating with concerned families about pick-up and figuring out alternate evacuation plans for dismissal.

Many were unable to tune into the mayor’s press conference. But the city’s Education Department messages on X (formerly known as Twitter) during the middle of the school day — and many principals had not known to watch for information through these channels.

As a result, none of the administrators who spoke with Chalkbeat actually implemented a shelter-in-place.

Many were left on their own to figure out if and how to dismiss students early or let parents come and retrieve kids, with mixed messages swirling from higher-ups.

“It was very confusing honestly,” said one Brooklyn school administrator who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media. “I was watching the press conference live and then I heard him say it, but I was like ‘I don’t think he really means we’re going to shelter in, that’s because that’s crazy.’”

Education Department spokesperson Nathan Sanoff reiterated Monday that “guidance during inclement weather events is to take refuge in the building.” When asked how the Education Department communicated that guidance, he pointed to the mayoral press conference and social media posts.

The idea of a blanket citywide shelter-in-place order seemed especially confusing to administrators because those directives are usually targeted at specific schools or neighborhoods, administrators said. While some schools with significant flooding issues may have benefited from such an order, it would have been a problem for other schools that needed to let students out early for safety reasons, they said.

In some cases, Styer said, schools called parents and guardians to pick up children from school during travel warnings, “which put even more of our community in harm’s way.”

The end-of-day email to principals also suggested that schools should make sure students and staff are familiar with alternate evacuation routes, ensure children have a way to get home, while public transportation, and keep a stock of supplies, including flashlights and blankets.

There was scarcely any time to do those things as the official guidance came less than an hour before dismissal, said Nelson, the Bronx administrator.

Though she said her school was largely spared from flooding and most of her students don’t commute long distances to the campus, she remained concerned about the lack of planning from the city.

“It is clear to me that we will have more flood issues like this in the future and the DOE doesn’t have any flood plans in place,” Nelson added.

At the Lafayette Educational Complex in Gravesend Brooklyn, which is in a flood zone, students and staff had to wade through thigh-high waters to get to the schools housed there, said teacher Elizabeth Fortune. The building’s basement and cafeteria flooded, just as they did during Hurricane Sandy in 2012, and she worried the building would flood in the future.

“We gave away all our school logo pjs to students and some were stuck in wet clothes or barefoot at school,” Fortun wrote in an email. “Once the waters began to recede, many older students wished to leave, but we were required to hold them until pick-up. Parents themselves were stranded without any ability to get to the school.”

Communication breakdown sows confusion

A total of 315 public schools required cleanup over the weekend due to flooding, Styer said. On Friday, city officials said 150 schools were affected.

One school, P.S. 312 in Bergen Beach (originally reported by the Education Department as P.S. 132), had to be evacuated because of a smoking boiler. That school resumed Monday, and the “vast majority” of water issues across city schools were “minor, requiring only mopping,” he said.

To some educators, the lack of communication over the shelter-in-place order felt emblematic of larger failures to give schools clear and timely guidance during a crisis. If top city officials misspoke about the shelter-in-order, they should have clarified that immediately, said one Manhattan school administrator.

“The lack of communication is what creates people making up their own stories,” said the administrator, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. “If this isn’t the policy, and someone made a mistake, just own that and keep it pushing.”

Instead, school leaders were left largely on their own to figure out the protocol — and the confusion trickled down to teachers and parents. Somewhere, they said, students should have been told.

A lot of our kids travel an hour each way on a good day,” said the Brooklyn administrator. “We don’t send kids traveling on buses they don’t normally take in the dark.”

Brooklyn dad Geoff Sanoff, who has two children in different high schools, recounted the widely varied response from his children’s schools.

At Brooklyn Tech, where one son attends, the school emailed families about what they were doing, where families should go to meet their teens, and options for kids to stay in the building as they waited to be picked up. At Stuyvesant High School, his other son’s school, there was “radio silence,” Sanoff said.

If flood plan pamphlets are not available to their Park Slope home, so the commute home for that son was doable. The other school, however, is accessible by the G train, which was not running. Sanoff’s son at that school, a freshman, wasn’t sure what to do, or where to wait to be picked up since he was not allowed to stay inside the building.

“No with subway, getting home from school turned into a three-hour round trip in a grandparent’s car to pick him up,” Sanoff said, adding that his son was late outside for more than an hour.

Sanoff understands that Brooklyn Tech — which is the nation’s largest high school with nearly 6,000 students — needs to get kids from across the city and needs to be on top of coordinating its communications. His other son’s school, which may serve only 700 students, has clearer communication, he added.

“It kind of baffles me that nobody said anything to him,” Sanoff said. “I am not angry with them, just curious about this situation. At the end of the day, the real question to me is, ‘How is it that each school has been left to fend for itself in a situation like this? Has there been no guidance from the DOE to help parents and schools know where to go, what to do, or who to ask for help, he said.

“People would have been really upset,” Nelson said. “It would have been wild.”

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On the same day that a raging rainstorm soaked the city and crippled service on half the lines in the subway, a top state official quietly issued a damning audit, highly critical of the MTA’s readiness for future storms.

The 39-page “Risk Assessment and Implementation of Measures to Address Extreme Weather Conditions” report published Friday by the office of State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli rapped the MTA for a lack of preparedness on several fronts, saying the transit agency is years behind where it should be.

“Today, the MTA has not implemented one of the most important recommendations of the 2008 Blue Ribbon Commission’s report—the development of the climate change adaptation master plan,” the report reads.

It states that the transit agency has run into delays on various projects designed to strengthen the system and missed the mark on coming up with an overall resiliency plan by 2015, as the commission had called for six years earlier.

The report notes that the transit agency has done nearly $8 billion of federally funded resiliency work after Superstorm Sandy clobbered the transit system in 2012, causing billions of dollars of damage to tunnels, train yards, stations and other critical equipment. But it says the MTA’s climate action plan is not expected to be published until later this year, nearly a decade after it was due.

It doesn’t seem even to be on transit officials’ minds, according to the comptroller’s office.

“While [New York City Transit] has developed winter, hurricane, rain and extreme heat plans, we found that these plans were inconsistently activated, with no documentation explaining the rationale for decision-making,” the report says.

The state comptroller’s audit was posted Friday afternoon, a spokesperson said. That was hours after flash flooding pounded the city and sent millions of gallons of rainwater cascading into underground stations during a storm that Gov. Kathy Hochul described as “Mother Nature at her most powerful.”

“This was the kind of rain that was once unimaginable—we called them once-in-a-century storms,” Hochul said Saturday. “But this is the third time since I was sworn in two years ago I’ve had a once-in-a-century storm.”

The Friday morning flash flood caused full or partial suspension of service on half the lines in the system, with MTA officials saying full service was restored by 8:30 p.m. after 20 million gallons of water were pumped out of the subway.

MTA chairman and CEO Janno Lieber said Monday that damage from the subway soaking was still being assessed, but estimated to be in the millions of dollars.

“When you get that volume, that inundation, the problem is the city sewer system is only configured for about an inch and three quarters in an hour,” Lieber said during a “Good Day New York” appearance on Fox 5. “And we got, in many cases, two and a half inches—so gravity is going to do its thing.

“The water that can’t be pushed into the city sewer system is gonna go somewhere, tends to go to the subways.”

The downpour left commuters who went into the city that day scrambling for other options. “Folks were like, ‘How am I going to get home?’” said Miranda Walker, who works for a construction development company on the Upper East Side.

Walker told THE CITY she took two subway lines and two bus routes to get home to The Bronx, completing in just under three hours a trip that usually takes her 45 minutes.

“That was the nightmare on Elm Street for me,” she said. “It was crazy.”

A Cash Flow Problem?

Klaus Jacob, a geophysicist at the Climate School at Columbia University who has worked at the school’s Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory for more than half a century, said there is no comprehensive solution between the city and the state and the MTA, this situation will go on and the economic losses are tremendous.

“At a Saturday briefing alongside Hochul, Lieber said the MTA took pre-storm measures to cover grates, along with other measures that minimized the damage when compared with the subway flooding that followed Hurricane Ida in September 2021. He added Monday that the transit agency has been working with the city to clear catch basins and keep water out of stations.

“So we’re getting better and better at preparation,” Lieber said. The latest big storm to inflict damage on the subway system came days before the MTA is expected to release its next 20-year Needs Assessment, a document outlining the transit agency’s long-term needs and priorities from 2025 to 2044.

“Fachai Faisal, a senior policy advisor with Reinvent Albany, said resilience against extreme weather will need to be a central part of that document because, “this isn’t a once-in-a-hundred-years flooding anymore—this is a constant problem.”

“A perfectly functioning system is completely unusable during a big storm if there is no attention to managing all the water,” she told THE CITY.

That has to be an important part of their plan.”

Jacob said subway flooding will remain a problem for the transit system without “major capital funding” to address climate change.

“They’re all waiting for the other to make the first step,” Jacob said. “It’s a vicious circle and if there is no comprehensive solution between the city and the MTA, this situation will go on and the economic losses are tremendous.”

Debris blocked subway tracks during Friday’s storm. Sept. 29, 2023.

COMMUTERS EXITING DELANCEY ST - ESSEX ST AFTER MOST TRAIN LINES WERE SUSPENDED DURING HURRICANE IDA IN 2021.

Marc A. Hermann/MTA

THE CITY is an independent, nonprofit news outlet dedicated to hard-hitting reporting that serves the people of New York.

Hiram Alejandro Durán/ THE CITY
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SUMMONS WITH NOTICE
STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF QUEENS
FILE NO. 2021-6550 SURROGATE'S COURT OF THE COUNTY OF QUEENS, TO WHOM NOTICE IS MANDATORY FOR ATTORNEYS (E-FILING NOT AVAILABLE). ATTORNEYS WHO CERTIFY IN GOOD FAITH THAT THEY LACK THE COMPUTER HARDWARE AND/OR SCANNER AND/OR PROFESSIONAL SPACE TO ACCESS AND REVIEW ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS INTO ELECTRONIC FORM (MANDATORY) ARE STILL RESPONSIBLE FOR DELIVERING THE SUMMONS WITH NOTICE TO THE PARTY UNDER EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION, INCLUDING THE PARTY UNDER EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION, WITHOUT THE USE OF ELECTRONIC FILING AS STATED IN THE ATTACHED DOCUMENTS, OR TO VENUE, WHERE THE CASE WAS FILED. ALL PARTIES SHOULD PUBLICLY FILE THE NOTICE OF ELECTION WITH THE NEW YORK STATE COURTS ELECTRONIC FILING SYSTEM TO MAKE THE NOTICE OF ELECTION MADE PUBLIC AND TO CREATE A NYSCEF ACCOUNT, WITH THE NEW YORK STATE COURTS ELECTRONIC FILING SYSTEM TO MAKE THE NOTICE OF ELECTION PUBLIC AND TO CREATE A NYSCEF ACCOUNT. 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MAGIC KINGDOM GROUP LLC

MAXIM EQUITY LLC
MAXIM EQUITY LLC ARTS. OF ORG. FILED WITH SEC. OF STATE OF NY (SSNY) ON 9/15/2023. OFFICE: QUEENS COUNTY. SSNY DESIGNATED AS AGENT OF LLC UPON WHOM PROCESS AGAINST IT MAY BE SERVED & SHALL MAIL PROCESS TO: 67-24 197TH ST, FRESH MEADOWS, NY 11365. PURPOSE: GENERAL PURPOSE.

JIANGANGNBW LLC
JIANGANGNBW LLC ARTS. OF ORG. FILED WITH THE NY SEC. OF STATE (SSNY) ON 5/15/2023. OFFICE IN XING'S CO. SSNY DESIGNATED AS AGENT OF LLC UPON WHOM PROCESS AGAINST IT MAY BE SERVED. SSNY SHALL MAIL PROCESS TO: 134 METROPOLITAN AVE, BROOKLYN, NY 11238. PURPOSE: ANY LAWFUL PURPOSE.

NUSTAR ELECTRICAL COMPANY LLC
NOTICE OF QUALIFICATION OF NUSTAR ELECTRICAL COMPANY LLC APPLIED FOR AUTH. FILED WITH SEC. OF STATE OF NY (SSNY) ON 12/6/2022. OFFICE LOCATION: QUEENS COUNTY. SSNY DESIGNATED AS AGENT OF LLC UPON WHOM PROCESS AGAINST IT MAY BE SERVED. SSNY SHALL MAIL PROCESS TO: 72-20 114TH ST, BAYSIDE, NY 11361. PURPOSE: ANY LAWFUL PURPOSE.

D.A. CASSELLA LLC
D.A. CASSELLA LLC ARTS. OF ORG. FILED WITH SEC. OF STATE (SSNY) ON 8/23/2023. OFFICE IN QUEENS COUNTY. SSNY DESIGNATED AS AGENT OF LLC UPON WHOM PROCESS MAY BE SERVED. SSNY SHALL MAIL PROCESS TO: 69-75 JUNIPER BLVD, SOUTH, BAY RIDGE, NY 11209. PURPOSE: ANY LAWFUL PURPOSE.

3005 39TH AVE LLC
3005 39TH AVE LLC ARTS. OF ORG. FILED WITH SEC. OF STATE OF NY (SSNY) ON 5/24/2023. OFFICE IN QUEENS COUNTY. SSNY DESIGNATED AS AGENT OF LLC UPON WHOM PROCESS AGAINST IT MAY BE SERVED & SHALL MAIL PROCESS TO: 38-30 31ST STREET, 1ST FL, LONG ISLAND CITY, NY 11101. PURPOSE: GENERAL PURPOSE.

LITTLE BITS AND LITTLE PIECES, LLC
LITTLE BITS AND LITTLE PIECES, LLC ARTS. OF ORG. FILED WITH SEC. OF STATE OF NY (SSNY) ON 8/29/2023. OFFICE IN QUEENS COUNTY. SSNY DESIGNATED AS AGENT OF THE LLC UPON WHOM PROCESS AGAINST IT MAY BE SERVED. SSNY SHALL MAIL COPY OF PROCESS TO: THE LLC, 13260 FOCK BUVD, SOUTH OZONE PARK, NY 11426. PURPOSE: ANY LAWFUL PURPOSE.

DINGA LLC

MR. IOGGI LLC

11357
11377
CHAMPLAB LLC

11379
GALLAGHER TILE LLC

11423
THE DAD STORE LLC

12207
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Our World In Pictures

President Joe Biden’s son Hunter Biden arrives for a court appearance, in Wilmington, Del, Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2023. AP Photo/Matt Rourke

Wednesday, October 4, 2023 • Queens Daily Eagle • 13
OnPoint NYC Is Allied With School Next Door

By Ella Napack
Brooklyn Daily Eagle

EDITORS’ NOTE: Knowledgeable Brooklynites with insights into their own drug problems will sometimes find themselves drawn to a spot near the 125th Street subway and Metro North stations, far north of their neighborhoods in Brooklyn. They are bound for OnPoint NYC, located in East Harlem. The powerful effect of OnPoint NYC in preventing drug overdoses has become well-known, as the following article illustrates. Now, Brooklyn groups such as VOCAL-NY are pushing Mayor Adams to establish OnPoint NYC in Brooklyn locations.

A neighbor Wolfe sits in a folding chair on busy 126th Street in East Harlem, blasting jazz out of the speaker beside him while he watches people go by. Wolfe has been a figure in the Harlem community for decades, so when he sees people suffering from addiction walk by, he points them to the OnPoint NYC safe-injection site behind him.

“This is called saving lives,” Wolfe said.

OnPoint has reversed over 1,000 overdoses since it opened in 2021, according to its own data.

“It has two harm-reduction sites in New York, one in East Harlem on 126th Street and the other in Washington Heights on 180th Street, the only sites currently authorized to run supervised drug consumption programs in the U.S. But although Wolfe supports OnPoint, many of his fellow community members do not.

“A lot of parents were worried when the site opened in December of 2021. This was the time when people were basically getting off the street. So this was a big question for many of our neighbors,” Wolfe said.

OnPoint NYC is being the best neighbors they can be,” she concluded.

“We were hearing parents’ fear that their child will pick up or step on a needle,” Buchenholz said. “Fear that their child will see somebody shooting drugs in his arm and become an addict. Fear that the addicts will bring more crime here. Fear that they will be selling and tempting our teens.”

“These concerns echo the ‘not in my backyard’ (NIMBY) view that opposes safe injection sites across the nation. Philadelphia’s City Council voted to ban such safe-injection sites across much of the city last Thursday for NIMBY reasons, and U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of N.Y. Damien Williams, threatened to shut down OnPoint’s sites last month.

The OnPoint site in East Harlem does have its champions, though, among them State Senator Gustavo Rivera, who is from the 33rd District in The Bronx and chairs the Committee on Health.

“Another objection to the site from the community is that it brings addicts from all over into the neighborhood, which at the moment, it does. Rivera is addressing this by spearheading a bill to authorize safe injection sites across the state. He says that if more are established, OnPoint will become less of a hub.

Buchenholz has joined OnPoint to help with outreach in other communities apprehensive about safe-injection sites and recently spoke to the Pew Foundation in Philadelphia about whether a program like OnPoint could be replicated there.

“Even though we are separate entities, we share the same goals of reducing harm in Harlem,” Betre said.

“Buchenholz told the story of a pregnant woman on their block, who was suffering from addiction. The woman later became involved with OnPoint’s harm-reduction practices for drug abuse during pregnancy. “We were both thinking of the baby,” Buchenholz said. “We both want to provide treatment for her and her child, and we both have that treatment.”

OnPoint’s staff can be seen along 126th Street throughout their day in their bright vests.

The school and the site have also held a series of events to help dispel parental and community anxiety about OnPoint.

OnPoint hosted a COVID-19 vaccine event for the school’s parents in January, incentivized with a $50 gift card for every person who received a dose, and a holistic health event in March for the ABC staff to help their separate teams get to know one another. The site also invited the ABC Parents Council to visit in March.

“When people see the harm-reduction practices that surround the supervised drug use, it changes the opinion,” Rivera said.

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As pick-up time rolls around, Wolfe and his neighbors are still playing music and chatting across the street.

“The drugs have always been here in this neighborhood,” Wolfe said. “Now OnPoint is here taking care of the people I know.”

By Ella Napack
Brooklyn Daily Eagle

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Supreme Court won't take up landlords' challenge to New York's rent regulations

By Sam Rabiyah and Rachel Holliday Smith
The CITY

The Supreme Court has rebuffed a major legal challenge to New York's rent stabilization law, spelling relief for tenants and putting a damper on landlords' hopes of gaining control to set the price of housing.

The high court said on Monday that it would not hear the case from two landlord groups in New York, the Rent Stabilization Association (RSA) and Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP). Together, those owners' groups represent owners of thousands of rent-stabilized buildings in New York City. As usual, the justices did not give a reason for not taking up the case.

The groups filed their lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of New York's rent stabilization law in summer 2019, just after Albany lawmakers passed reforms that nearly eliminated landlords' ability to increase rents on vacant apartments and ultimately remove them from rent regulation.

Since then, CHIP executive director Jay Mar- tin said in a statement on Monday, "the law's punitive effects have dramatically worsened," referencing foreclosures among apartment building owners.

"We remain convinced that the law is irrational and vulnerable to more specific challenges," he said. "One way or another this law must go down, its current form is destroying New York's housing." If the case had moved forward, it could have had significant consequences for New York City's one million rent stabilized apartments — which account for about half the rentals in the city. With a majority-conservative Supreme Court, landlords had hoped they would get a landmark decision giving property owners relief from New York's decades-old law regulating rents.

But the Supreme Court's decision to not grant a writ of certiorari — the legal device to act on property tax relief, aid in repairing vacant apartments and on what it calls "redlining" by property insurers.

Decades of Increases

The owners behind the lawsuit argued that the rent stabilization law impinges on their right to profit from their property, as enshrined in the Fifth Amendment's "taking clause" that says the government cannot take property from private owners without compensation.

Still, the latest data on landlord incomes from the Rent Guidelines Board this year suggests that owning rent stabilized property remains profitable in most cases, and has been lucrative over the past few decades.

Released annually, the Board's Income and Expense Study tracks owners' "net operating income" or NOI, which is the gross income that a rental property generates minus any expenses aside from debt payments. The average NOI of rent-stabilized landlords took a big hit during COVID, dropping 8% and 9% in 2020 and 2021 respectively, losses not seen since 2003. This drop, however, comes after three decades of income increases. Landlords of regulated buildings make more than three times as much as they did in 1990, which represents a 50% bump after adjusting for inflation, the study reports.

Data from the report also suggests that rent stabilized units themselves held their revenues more steadily during COVID than market-rate units in the same buildings, and may have helped landlords stave off some of the economic hit from this time. From 2020 to 2021, buildings that were 100% rent stabilized saw 4% net income loss, which was less than half of the rate of buildings that had a mix of rent stabilized and market-rate units. Those saw a 9.1% dip in profits in the same time.

The 2019 rent law and the pandemic coincided with a wave of vacancies in rent stabilized apartments, a trend landlords say is driven by their inability to raise rents sufficiently to renovate vacant units.

THE CITY previously reported a spike of over 60,000 vacant rent stabilized apartments that landlords reported in 2020. More recent data shows this spike to be a COVID-era outlier, suggesting the 2019 rent laws had little long-term effect on landlords' abilities to rent out stabilized apartments.

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Correction. Commissioner Louis Molina, who recently has had to deny rumors that he is planning to run for mayor this fall, has said that they don’t believe the city will be able to close Rikers Island by August 2027, citing its history and the fact that the mayor and the commissioner have also publicly questioned the plan to replace Rikers Island with the four borough-based jails.

In recent months, Molina and A.D. have said they expect Rikers Island’s average daily population to hit 7,000 at some point in 2024. While the BOC refrained from pointing the finger at any one person or governmental body in its report, advocates and lawmakers have in recent months accused A.D. and Molina of flouting the closure plan.

On Tuesday, advocates told the Eagle that they believe the BOC’s refusal to refocus on the city’s plan to close Rikers is directed at A.D.

“We see this as a statement that the mayor or others need to get in gear,” said John Proctor, a spokesperson for Freedom A.D. Santa Duffey, the co-director of Freedom A.D., blamed the mayor and his administration’s policies — including the NYPD’s recent increase in issuing criminal summonses and budget cuts that have led to the elimination of social services intended to keep people out of the criminal justice system — for Rikers’ ballooning population.

“There’s all these ways that he’s creating pressure in the wrong direction around incarceration,” Duffey said.

City Councilmember Carlina Rivera, who chairs the council’s Committee on Criminal Justice, told the Eagle on Tuesday that the City Council remains committed as a stakeholder to the closure plan and to reducing the jail population.

“The administration bears the burden of demonstrating that they’ve marshaled every possible resource to keep the plan to have a just transition on track,” Rivera said. “Mayor A.D. really has not shown a commitment to that.”

“The whole plan is very big, it’s very complicated, but it is imperative that it can be done.”

The Board of Correction recently issued a status report on the city’s efforts to close Rikers Island by 2027.

Rivera added.

But the office did not respond to the Eagle’s request for comment on Tuesday.

Since A.D. took office at the start of 2022, the city has missed a number of milestones baked into the city’s plan to close Rikers Island: the laws governing the jail’s closure were passed at various times by the City Council from 2019 through 2020.

Among the laws detailing Rikers’ closure is the Renewable A.D., which requires that the city explore re-opening Rikers Island as a renewable energy hub once the jail complex is closed for good. To get the hub up and running as soon as possible, the law requires that the DOC transfer unused land or facilities — should they exist — to the Department of Citywide Administrative Services. Every six months until August 2027, the time by which the entire island should be transferred over.

In the final year of former Mayor Bill de Blasio’s administration, the DOC transferred ownership of a vacant parcel of land and one of its nearly one dozen jail facilities to DCAS. However, those first two completed transfers have been the city’s last.

Earlier this summer, A.D. and the DOC missed their third consecutive deadline to transfer over an unseated piece of land or jail facility to DCAS. The A.D. administration has yet to complete a single transfer since A.D. took office in January 2022.

The A.D. administration has claimed that they have been unable to make the transfers because there have not been any vacant facilities or parcels of land available. However, a number of lawmakers and advocates have questioned the claim.

City Councilmember Robert Holden, who opposes the plan to close Rikers, said in August that he saw empty facilities and unused land during a visit alongside members of the council’s “Common Sense Caucus.”

“It’s a huge island with empty buildings,” Holden said.

A group of councilmembers on the City Council’s Committee on Criminal Justice, including both the majority and the minority, have made a visit to the island over the summer and said that they were told by DOC officials that there were parcels of land on the island that were not in use by DOC.

The DOC itself has announced the closure of a number of facilities in recent months. However, the agency has held on to the buildings, citing a potential need to use them in the future as Rikers’ population increases.

In 2018, the DOC removed detainees from the George Mottchan Detention Center on Rikers Island but has not transferred the building over to DCAS — it’s currently used as a training academy annex, according to the DOC.

In June 2022, the department also removed detainees from the Otis Bantum Correctional Facility on Rikers Island, as well as from The Rikers. In July 2022, the floating jail barge known as The Boat — the department said it intended to transfer detainees off of VCBC by the end of October.

But as the city attempts to close facilities on Rikers, it remains unclear whether there will be new facilities to house them by 2027.

Though the Brooklyn jail is expected to open before the other three borough-based jails, it is currently not on track to open until 2023, two years after the city’s legally-mandated deadline to close Rikers.

Brooklyn Borough President Emily A. King told the Eagle that the Brooklyn facility is currently in the design phase, and “the remaining three borough jail [are] still in the procurement phase of the project,” according to the BOC’s report.

**Opinion:** The Inflation Reduction Act is a clean energy plan that New York needs

By Rep. Nydia Velazquez and Julie Tighe

Special to the Eagle

Just over one year ago, President Joe Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) into law. Since then, we have begun to see this historic achievement in clean energy and climate progress.

For example, the Ravenswood Generating Station is the largest gas-fired power plant in the city and its pollution has fueled the asthma epidemic in the surrounding neighborhoods for decades. This is why a plan is underway to transform Ravenswood from a fossil-fuel burning power plant that pollutes our air to one that runs on renewable energy. What has become known as Renewable Ravenswood — introduced by the IRA’s Light & Power, the current owner of the plant, is possible only because of New York State’s ambitious climate law and, critically, the fact that the IRA supports clean energy.

The investments put forth by the IRA are necessary to stem the tide of climate change, and the crisis could not be more urgent.

The good news is, New York State has already seen $11.7 billion in public infrastructure and clean energy investments and an additional 4,300 new clean energy jobs across our state. But we need to ensure the state continues getting these investments and that communities overburdened by environmental hazards like Bushwick and Woodside in Brooklyn and Queens reap the benefits. How does this happen? It’s simple: private companies, non-profits, and our city and state governments need to ensure this legislation translates into real jobs and credits and rebates, of which there are many.

Individuals must also step up to take advantage of the benefits in the IRA, including tax credits to seal and insulate our homes for services such as rooftop solar and battery storage. Renters and homeowners alike can benefit from many of the rebates, like those to help purchase new appliances, such as highly efficient water heaters, induction stoves, air heat pumps. These upgrades will reduce the amount of electricity renters and homeowners use and help lower their energy bills.

One year ago, we did something that so many, for so long, thought was impossible. We finally took a major national step forward in the fight against climate change.

Even a wind turbine built, every solar panel installed, and every new electric car or truck that rolls off the manufacturing line will not grow our future for New York.

Now it’s up to us to make sure this is only the beginning.


Julie Tighe is the president of the New York League of Conservation Voters.