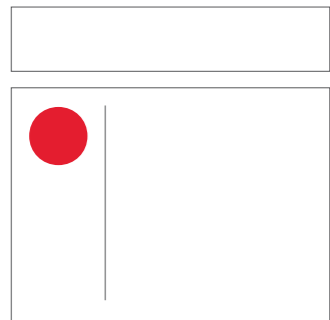


Print & web redesign of The Chief-Leader



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Bill Ostendorf, founder & CEO

bill@creativecirclemedia.com 401-455-1555

High-Stakes Drama Over Mayor's Vaccine Mandate

The Chief Civil Service LEADER THE CIVIL EMPLOYEES' WEEKLY

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FRIDAY,
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125th YEAR - Vol. CXXV, No. 36

TheChiefLeader.com

NEW YORK, NY

Fire Unions Rally Vs. Mandate; Data Shows It's Moving the Needle

'We're Not Anti-Vaccination, We're Pro-Choice,' Say Union Leaders

By BOB HENNELLY

With the coronavirus-vaccine mandate deadline less than 30 hours away, a thousand boisterous firefighters and their supporters converged on Gracie Mansion Oct. 28 to protest the requirement, demanding that inoculation remain a personal choice, with regular virus testing as a continued alternative.

"The New York City firefighters take COVID seriously," International Association of Firefighters President Edward Kelly told the throng, which extended a full city block. "At the height of the pandemic, when we didn't know what this virus could do to us or if we could bring it home to our families, the New York City firefighters answered every single call the same way they have for hundreds of years."

Invokes Labor Secretary

He said U.S. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh, a former union leader in Boston—where regular testing remains an alternative to vaccination—had urged Mayor de Blasio to negotiate with uniformed-union presidents



The Chief-Leader/Michel Friang

PLAYING WITH FIRE: Emergency Medical Service Local 2507 President Oren Barzilay, at mic during a 2019 union rally, over the past three months has been accused by reporters and columnists of 'disinformation' and spreading 'false and misleading claims' about the coronavirus vaccine. Most recently, he speculated on whether there was a link to two union members dying within four days of being inoculated, saying he wasn't suggesting the vaccine was the cause, only that 'there's not been enough research to determine if this is safe or not.' The Fire Department's chief spokesman responded, "The FDNY has no confirmed deaths related to the COVID-19 vaccine," while 16 of its employees had died of the virus.

Speculated on Link to Death of 2 Members

EMS Union Leader Accused of False Claims About Harm Caused by Vaccine

By BOB HENNELLY

While numerous uniformed-union presidents have sharply criticized Mayor de

"false and misleading claims" about alleged health risks posed by the vaccine.

And that was before he told a reporter from this newspaper Oct. 20 that two of his

Emergency Dispatch Tech Positions With Westchester at \$56G

**Experience is Required;
File Through Nov. 15**

**Pay \$40 Fee For
Jan. 22 Exam**

Westchester County is accepting applications for Emergency Communications Technicians through Nov. 15 for exams scheduled Jan. 22. The salary range is \$56,070 to \$69,890 and the test fee is \$40.

Duties

Under supervision, Emergency Communications Technicians are responsible for monitoring and operating two-way radio

communication systems, telecommunication systems and computer-aided dispatch systems as part of an information network designed to enable effective response to reported emergency situations.

They receive and dispatch calls in accordance with industry standardized protocols, while providing immediate direction to callers on situation support and

Continued on Page 19

Judge Rejects Restraining-Order Bid PBA Sues City To Halt Vax Mandate



The Chief

Civil Service LEADER

THE CIVIL EMPLOYEES' WEEKLY

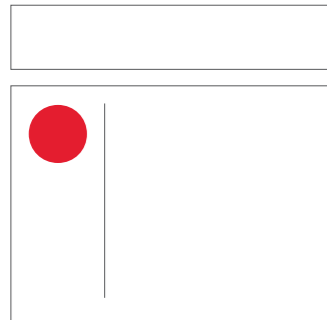
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A red sunburst graphic is positioned behind the text 'The Chief'. The sunburst is centered between the words 'The' and 'Chief', with its rays extending upwards and downwards. The text is in a bold, black, serif font. A thin red horizontal line is positioned below the text.

#13

The Chief

A red sunburst graphic is positioned behind the text 'The Chief'. The sunburst is centered between the words 'The' and 'Chief', with its rays extending upwards and downwards. The text is in a bold, black, serif font. A thin red horizontal line is positioned below the text.

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#15

THE CHIEF

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The Chief

A red sunburst graphic is positioned behind the text 'The Chief'. The sunburst is centered at the end of the word 'Chief', with its rays extending upwards and downwards. The text is in a bold, black, serif font. A thin red horizontal line is positioned below the text.

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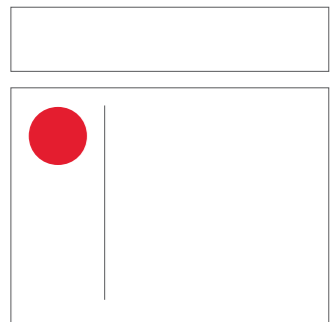
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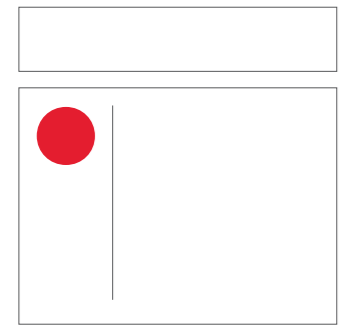
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Weapons seizures in schools climb 80%

Mayor rethinks cuts in safety agents

BY CRYSTAL LEWIS
clewis@thechiefleader.com

Following the NYPD's release of data showing that the number of weapons confiscated in schools jumped 80 percent compared to pre-pandemic levels, Mayor Adams said he was open to reconsidering a move that would permanently cut 560 School Safety Agent positions from the budget.

Authorities seized 3,315 weapons in city public schools between July

1, 2021 and Feb. 20, according to the NYPD. That number was significantly higher than the 1,845 knives, Tasers and other weapons that were recovered during that same period in the 2019-2020 school year.

So far, 14 guns have been confiscated this school year, compared to just one during the 2019-2020 school year.

In particular, the number of Tasers seized rose dramatically: from 47 to 325, a 591-percent increase.

A category of weapons labeled simply "other," which includes everything from brass knuckles to pepper spray, grew 326 percent from 279 to 1,190. The number of knives



Photo courtesy of Teamsters Local 237

These weapons, confiscated from a student at Intermediate School 70 in Manhattan, were among a record haul seized in a nearly eight-month period that ended last month.

recovered also jumped 25 percent.

Department of Education spokesman Nathaniel Styer said the data indicated that the partnership between schools and School Safety Agents "stops weapons and other prohibited items that do not belong in schools from entering our buildings."

'An indictment on city'

During a Feb. 23 press conference, Mayor Adams called it "an indictment on our city when a child must carry a Taser, a stun gun or a gun. That is not acceptable."

Gregory Floyd, president of

Teamsters Local 237, which represents School Safety Agents, believed that some students were bringing weapons to school for self-defense.

"The good kids are bringing weapons to school to protect themselves from the gang members. The gang members are bringing the weapons to school because there's no penalty," he said.

He cited the Raise the Age law, which increased the age of criminal responsibility to 18, as a major reason for the uptick.

"Before, you had laws in place.

See **WEAPONS**, page 2

Invest in workers and infrastructure, unions urge city

Push Council to spend on training and to refurbish aging buildings

BY CRYSTAL LEWIS
clewis@thechiefleader.com

City public-schools Cleaner Angel Ocasio, a shop steward at Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ, went before a City Council committee recently and recounted how during freezing winter weather, custodial staff often had to stay in school buildings overnight to make sure boilers were run-





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John McCarten/New York City Council

Hundreds who work in the nonprofit human service field rallied at City Hall March 10 to advocate for wage increases. Two-thirds of the 80,000 nonprofit employees working in the city earn near-poverty wages.

Nonprofit workers rally for better pay

BY CRYSTAL LEWIS
clewis@thechiefleader.com

Like many employees in the nonprofit human-services sector, Johanna Ortiz, a pediatric community health worker, often struggles to make ends meet.

“There is no greater satisfaction than the gratitude the family gives us when we help them every day. However, my colleagues and our families cannot live off of gratitude,” the single mother said at a March 10 rally at City Hall where hundreds of nonprofit workers gathered to demand better pay.

Although the city spends \$5.6 billion annually on human-services contracts, two-thirds of staff working in senior centers, after-school programs and food pantries that contract with the city make near-poverty wages in 2019, according to a recent report by the Center for New York City Affairs. The median pay for

See **NONPROFIT**, page 5

NYPD’s anti-crime teams return to city streets

City’s TV and film post-production freelancers look to join CWA

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NEW YORK, NY

MLC to File Complaint Over Mayor's Failure To Bargain on Vaccine

He Hides Union Leaders For Lack Of Urgency In Midst of Pandemic

By CRYSTAL LEWIS

The Municipal Labor Committee is set to file an unfair-labor-practice complaint over the city's purported failure to negotiate vaccination mandates for public workers.

Favor It, But Must Talk

"Many of the unions support and urge their members to be vaccinated. However, the city is required to collectively bargain the steps to be taken for implementing this policy," MLC Chair Harry Nespoli said in a statement.

Mr. Nespoli, who is also president of the Uniformed Sanitationmen's Association, said during an Aug. 24 phone interview that the main purpose of the complaint was to "get to the table."

Pandemic Overrides Rights?

He added that he believed the city could extend the vaccine mandate to other city workers, saying it was "absolutely within our rights as an employer."

Continued on Page 8



HARRY NESPOLI: 'City hasn't answered our questions.'



Photo courtesy of NYPD

NEXT FOR NEEDLES? Numerous inoculation mandates in both the public and private sectors followed the FDA's full approval of Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine, and Mayor de Blasio has suggested that there could be more to come.

Unmoved by FDA Approval of Pfizer Shots

Vaccine Mandate Next for Cops, COs? Shea Likes Idea; PBA Set to Sue

By RICHARD KHAVKINE

In the hours following the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's full approval of the Pfizer vaccine Aug. 23, the U.S. Department of Defense said it intended to mandate vaccinations for all service members.

The State University of New York system had already announced that pending approval of the vaccines, its students also would have to be inoculated against the coronavirus if they wanted to attend in-person classes.

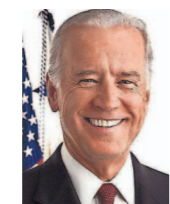
And Mayor de Blasio announced Aug. 20, as talk spread of the FDA's imminent approval, that all 148,000 Department of Education employees must show proof of a first dose by Sept. 27.

With Labor Day Near, CLC President Takes Stock Cause for Union Optimism With Biden, Even With Key Items Still Unresolved

By RICHARD STEIER

"It really has been a new day for labor with the Biden Administration," AFL-CIO New York City Central Labor President Vincent Alvarez said, starting with the firing of Donald Trump's pro-management National Labor Relations Board General Counsel, Peter Robb, in the new President's first hours on the job.

"Biden, from his picks on the NLRB to his Secretary of Labor [Martin J. Walsh, who before serving as Mayor of Boston ran that city's Building and Trades Council...in my lifetime, the most pro-union and pro-labor



PRESIDENT BIDEN: 'On the side of working people.'

administration we have ever had," Mr. Alvarez said. The leader of the umbrella

group for city AFL-CIO affiliates was speaking Aug. 24, sitting in a conference room in the Metro Area Postal Union's headquarters just west of Madison Square Garden that he's been using while the CLC's new offices are being built on the top floor.

Close, But Not Yet Popping

It could have served as a metaphor for the labor movement, both here and nationally, with a number of welcome changes under construction but yet to be completed.

Continued on Page 15

State Correction Officer Trainees Posts Offered Starting at \$55,057

No Written Test; File by Oct. 20

Spanish-Language Posts Available

The State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision is accepting applications for Correction Officer Trainees through Oct. 20. The salary is \$55,057.

Appointees who work in New York City or in Nassau, Suffolk, Rockland or Westchester counties will receive an additional \$3,577 annual downstate adjustment. Appointees who work in Dutchess, Orange, or Putnam counties will receive an additional \$1,332 annual

mid-Hudson adjustment. The application fee is \$35.

Duties

Under direct supervision, Correction Officers are responsible for the custody and security, as well as the safety and well-being, of incarcerated individuals in state correctional facilities. They supervise the movement and activities of incarcerated

Continued on Page 19

Enlightened But Corrupt

Mourn Scotto, Ex-Union Leader With Two Sides

By RICHARD STEIER

Late in Anthony Scotto's 1979 racketeering trial, after the then-president of Local 1814 of the International Longshoremen's Association endured a tough cross-examination, Newsday columnist Murray Kempton declared, standing in the pressroom of the Foley Square Courthouse in Manhattan, "I hope to God justice doesn't prevail."

The remark, by a man who would later win a Pulitzer Prize, reflected the paradox presented by Mr. Scotto, who died Aug. 22 at 87.

Not long after that, he would be convicted by a jury of extorting more than \$200,000 from waterfront executives for steering business their way while also significantly reducing the Workers' Compensation claims by members of Local 1814 along the Brooklyn docks.

Improved Members' Lives

But he was also considered an unusually enlightened union leader in an industry long known for corruption and violence, personified by his uncle by marriage, Albert Anastasia, Mr. Anastasia, a legendary enforcer for Murder Inc. during the 1940s and a fearsome presence on the docks until he was murdered in a barber shop in a spectacular 1957 mob hit, was the brother of Mr.



ROBERT B. FISKE: 'Powerful evidence' convicted Scotto.

Scotto's father-in-law, Anthony "Tough Tony" Anastasio, whom Mr. Scotto succeeded as president of Local 1814 in 1963 while in his late 20s.

He played a key role in integrating the Brooklyn piers, where racism had long kept blacks from gaining secure jobs. He established a union medical clinic on Court St., not far from the docks, named in memory of his late father-in-law, and when containerization sped the loading and shipping process but led to the elimination of many dockworker jobs, he negotiated a guaranteed annual income for those who were displaced.

Mr. Kempton's remark acknowledged that the evidence was against the labor leader, but also bore his

Continued on Page 20

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Weapons seizures in schools climb 80%

Mayor rethinks cuts in safety agents

By CRYSTAL LEWIS

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1, 2021 and Feb. 20, according to the NYPD. That number was significantly higher than the 1,845 knives, Tasers and other weapons that were recovered during that same period in the 2019-2020 school year.

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Photo courtesy of Teamsters Local 237

These weapons, confiscated from a student at Intermediate School 70 in Manhattan, were among a record haul seized in a nearly eight-month period that ended last month.

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'An indictment on city'

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He cited the Raise the Age law, which increased the age of criminal responsibility to 18, as a major reason for the uptick.

"Before, you had laws in place.

See WEAPONS, page 2

Invest in workers and infrastructure, unions urge city

Push Council to spend on training and to refurbish aging buildings

By CRYSTAL LEWIS

City public-schools Cleaner Angel Ocasio, a shop steward at Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ, went before a City Council committee recently and recounted how during freezing winter weather, custodial staff often had to stay in school buildings overnight to make sure boilers were running properly to prevent them from bursting.

"The aging conditions of our school buildings makes our job that much harder. Workers' rights are also the right to a healthy and safe workplace," Mr. Ocasio told members of the Civil Service and Labor Committee Feb. 23. He asked that the city invest in and upgrade school buildings, many of which are more than 40 years old.

Dozens push for investments

Along with officials from workers-rights organizations, Mr. Ocasio was among dozens of labor leaders within the public and private sectors who pushed the Council for increased investments in infrastructure and in training citywide.

Kevin Elkins, the political director for the District Council of Carpenters, testified during the

See INVESTMENTS, page 7



Courtesy of FDNY

Colleagues pay tribute to fallen Firefighter

FDNY pallbearers carry the casket of fallen Firefighter Jesse Gerhard into St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church in Bay Shore prior to his funeral service Feb. 24. Firefighter Gerhard died Feb. 15, a day after helping battle a two-alarm house fire in Far Rockaway. See story on page 3.

Labor applauds Biden's Supreme Court pick

Nomination backed by UFT, AFGE, others

By BOB HENNELLY

Labor could soon have a steadfast ally on the Supreme Court.

U.S. District Court Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, President Biden's pick to succeed retiring Justice Stephen Breyer, ruled in 2018 that President Trump had violated the U.S. Constitution when he tried to deny more than two million Federal workers their long-established rights to union representation.

In August 2018, Judge Jackson ruled that executive orders issued by Mr. Trump that May, including one targeting the time union representatives could spend representing members, violated



Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson speaks at the White House after President Joe Biden introduced her as his nominee to succeed Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, who is retiring.

the First Amendment as well as the separation of powers doctrine. Mr. Trump's orders coincided with uni-

lateral moves by federal agencies, including by the Department of Education and the Veterans Administration, to impose terms and conditions of employment without first negotiating with unions.

Trump 'overstepped bounds'

While Judge Jackson, in a 119-page opinion, conceded that it was well within President Trump's purview to issue executive orders on labor relations, those directives could not undermine existing and well-established collective-bargaining rights.

"And because many of the executive order provisions that the unions challenge have that effect, this court concludes that the President has overstepped his bounds," Judge Jackson wrote. Although the U.S. Court of Appeals the

See JACKSON, page 2

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THE REDESIGNED AND RE-ORGANIZED Chief you are holding in your hands represents another step forward in our effort to create a better watchdog for workers in New York City and across the U.S.

Under new ownership since August, we're investing, growing and changing to build on our 125 years of shining a light on the needs and dreams and successes of American labor.

This is just another phase of a year-long effort to improve, expand and grow The Chief to better serve the New York area and American workers. We'll be adding more staff, more news coverage and additional perspectives to advance the cause of labor.

Our new nameplate preserves our long-running brand and typography but explains our role and mission: A voice for workers. The redesign of our print newspaper reaffirms our commitment to

See CHIEF, page 3

THE NEWS INSIDE Many City Employees Still Not Back in Their Offices

Despite Mayor de Blasio's goal of getting 80,000 municipal workers to return to their offices by May after doing their jobs remotely for more than a year, many are still working from home at least three days a week, and the City Council hasn't brought much of its staff back to City Hall or its offices at 250 Broadway. P2

Razzle Dazzle Cuomo Departs in a Guy Way, Not in a Shy Way

Andrew Cuomo's farewell address echoed his resignation announcement: he implied he was being unfairly forced from office by a political stampede and was leaving only out of his love of the state, as he continued to attack the report finding he sexually harassed 11 women. P4

Involved in Robbery Where 3 Died Cuomo Stirs Outrage With Pardon of Killers' Driver

On his way out the door, a Governor who was criticized previously for not using his power to commute sentences often enough did so for David Gilbert, a getaway driver in the 1981 armored-car robbery that led to the murders of a guard and two police officers in Rockland County, sparking outrage from the dead men's families. P2

Pledges to End 'Toxic' Rule Hochul Sets Her Priorities, Gives Updated Virus Death Count

The new Governor revealed that more than 55,000 state residents have died of the coronavirus, nearly 12,000 more than her predecessor listed. She vowed to be transparent, have no tolerance for misbehavior by staffers, and put a priority on vaccinations. P4

FEDERAL MONITOR: CHAOS AT RIVERS... P2 CUOMO PARDON STIRS OUTRAGE... P2 VACCINE PROTESTERS RALLY... P3 CITY CERTIFICATIONS... P19 EXAMS FOR JOBS... P19

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INSIDE

Ex NYPD union head arrested Federal fraud charges could net Ed Mullins 20 years, p. 2

Cuomo spends to repair reputation TV ads rip AG James, 'political attacks,' p. 9

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, p. 4 EXAMS FOR JOBS, p. 11 LABOR AROUND THE NATION, p. 12

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PUSH BACK: Benny Boscio Jr., the president of the Correction Officers' Benevolent Association, rebuffed a Federal monitor's findings that city jails are a hotbed of dysfunction in part because of a staffing crisis. The union leader, at the mic during an Aug. 16 rally of Department of Correction officers, said that officer absenteeism is a consequence of 'inhumane working conditions' that have gone unaddressed by city and DOC officials.

COBA: Working Conditions 'Inhumane'

Federal Monitor: Jails Teeming With 'Disorder and Chaos'

By RICHARD KHAVKINE

A "pervasive high level of disorder and chaos" is plaguing city jails, according to a Federal watchdog. In a status report addressed to a U.S. District Judge, Steve Martin, the monitor charged with cataloging the Department of Correction's efforts to mitigate what for decades has been one of the nation's most stubbornly violent jail systems, said conditions inside "have further deteriorated in the past few months, with a steady increase in serious use-of-force incidents, a disturbing rise in the level of security lapses and unchecked breaches and failures of basic security protocols."

He also cited "instances of inadequate supervision made worse because of staffing challenges."

'Compromised Safety'

Noting "at least" four inmate suicides since December and inmates who were left to languish in intake areas without food or medical care, Mr. Martin said the worsening conditions were tied to spikes in "excessive and unchecked staff absences" that began in April. Those "crisis-level" increases in absenteeism have obliged officers to work unreasonable overtime in the form of double and triple shifts, "further compromising the safety of the Facilities."

"This state of seriously compromised safety has

spiraled to a point at which, on a daily basis, there is a manifest risk of serious harm to both detainees and staff, which in turn generates high levels of fear among both groups, with each exacerbating the other of already existing challenging conditions," Mr. Martin's 10-page letter noted. "Turmoil is the inevitable outcome of such a volatile state of affairs."

He said a failure to hold officers accountable in a timely manner was also contributing to the poor state of the jail system, stating that more than 1,800 staff-misconduct cases were awaiting full resolution.

COBA: A PR Stunt

The president of the Correction Officers' Benevolent Association, Benny Boscio Jr., rebutted the monitor's findings, calling them a public-relations stunt shedding little light on the endemic problems faced daily by officers.

"The fact remains that officers are out sick because they continue to be forced to work under hostile and inhumane working conditions where they are forced to work twenty-five hours or more without meals and rest and are brutally assaulted by inmates with impunity," the union leader said in a statement.

Mr. Boscio suggested, as he has to DOC Commissioner Vincent Schiraldi, that Mr. Martin do a triple tour without break to find out why Correction Officers

"aren't physically able to report to work the next day." The Monitor shows how little he understands about the staffing crisis or how to solve it by referring to sick and injured officers as a potential "job action" that must be addressed appropriately," the union leader said.

DOC: 'Clearing Backlog'

In a statement, Mr. Schiraldi, who instituted a new sick-leave policy at the beginning of August that according to the DOC has dramatically cut absences, said the department was committed to tackling the monitor's concerns but addressed only the discipline aspect he had raised.

"We have worked diligently to clear a backlog of pending investigations and impose formal discipline or other corrective action when warranted," he said in a statement. "Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, we have resolved more cases than ever before in the last year and a half and are actively discussing the Monitor's recommendations with our partners at the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings and the City Law Department."

Mr. Martin said that for the time being, city and DOC officials were best placed to address the issues he raised, particularly chronic absenteeism. Among the options to "limit inmate abuses," he wrote, is to implement protocols to

Continued on Page 15

Concern About Delta Surge May Continue to Limit Return

Many Employees Still Aren't Back In Office Full-Time Despite Mayor's Push

By BOB HENNELLY

Even as Mayor de Blasio presses for the full return next month of the 80,000 city workers who have done their jobs from home during the pandemic, the surge of the Delta variant of the coronavirus has prompted some leading private-sector employers to put off return dates—in some cases until the beginning of next year.

Wall Street firms like BlackRock and Wells Fargo have delayed full returns until October, and Facebook, with 4,000 employees, will wait until January, according to the New York Times. In late July, Google extended its work-from-home policy through Oct. 18, CNN Business reported.

Death Rate Still Low

While the city is seeing a spike in virus cases, its death rate has remained low. The Monitor shows how little he understands about the staffing crisis or how to solve it by referring to sick and injured officers as a potential "job action" that must be addressed appropriately," the union leader said.

DOC: 'Clearing Backlog'

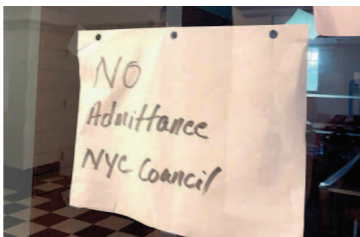
In a statement, Mr. Schiraldi, who instituted a new sick-leave policy at the beginning of August that according to the DOC has dramatically cut absences, said the department was committed to tackling the monitor's concerns but addressed only the discipline aspect he had raised.

Few at Their Desks

During a recent walk-through of several floors of the David Dinkins Municipal Building at 1 Centre St., employees were still scarce. Union leaders representing workers at multiple city agencies confirmed that only civilian employees of uniformed services like the Police and Fire departments were in their offices five days a week, while those with other mayoral agencies were more likely to be coming in one or two days a week.

"This is a very strange time with the city trying to reopen and it seems like nobody is speaking up," said Bob Croghan, chairman of the Organization of Staff Analysts, which represents 4,000 Analysts across virtually every city makes sense. I think people should come back. You know, these work environments are very safe, and we need to do the best work we can do for the people. And this is the thing with public servants: our job is to help people through this

Continued on Page 15



OFFICE POLITICS: While Mayor de Blasio had wanted a full return to lower Manhattan by city workers as early as May, down the hall from his office, the City Council has still not resumed operations, with many of its employees continuing to work remotely. Some Council Members as well as other city officials have described adaptations that have included hybrid work models in which some employees are in the office on an irregular basis and changes in office design to protect both workers and the public.

to come in two days a week and that another colleague only has to come in one day a week," he said. "Then there was 400 city workers who was told he had to start coming one day a week who had been working from home from the start of the pandemic. The only problem was that his home was now in Arizona."

Mr. Croghan said at an Aug. 20 Municipal Labor Committee meeting, he learned that a Department of Sanitation employee and an NYPD Detective had recently died from the virus.

In an Aug. 14 tweet, the Association of Legislative Employees, which represents the hundreds of City Council staffers assigned to individual Council Members as well as some central staff, took issue with the institution that its members were shirking their duties.

"Many of them have been working out of district offices since last year responding to their constituents' needs in the midst of the worst health-related nightmare our city has experienced in recent history, often putting their mental and physical well-being on the line," ALE tweeted.

"Our Council-wide phased-in return begins after Labor Day," wrote Jennifer Ferrino, a spokeswoman for Council Speaker Corey Johnson. "The goal is to have staff spending at least one day a week back in the office by October 4th."

"I don't think it makes sense. I think people should come back. You know, these work environments are very safe, and we need to do the best work we can do for the people. And this is the thing with public servants: our job is to help people through this

He said he turned to an interior decorator, who figured out how to utilize the space more efficiently, but there

Continued on Page 15

Was Getaway Driver in 1981 Brink's Truck Robbery

Departing Cuomo Stirs Outrage By Commuting Militant's Murder Rap

By RICHARD KHAVKINE

David Gilbert, who has served four decades in prison for his role in a militant group's 1981 robbery of a Brink's truck in Rockland County that resulted in the killing of a guard and two Nyack policemen, will have a chance to make the case that he has done his time.

In one of his last official acts as Governor before leaving office Aug. 24, Andrew Cuomo granted Mr. Gilbert, now 76, the opportunity to bring up a parole panel in the next few weeks.

Mr. Gilbert, an unarmed getaway driver, was convicted

of three counts of second-degree murder and four counts of first-degree robbery in 1983 and sentenced to 75-years-to-life. He is expected to appear before a parole panel in the next few weeks.

Mr. Cuomo's move was roundly condemned by past and present law-enforcement officials. Larry Ayers, the president of the Rockland County Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, called the Governor's commutation of the former Weather Underground militant "disgusting."

Mr. Gilbert, an unarmed getaway driver, was convicted

and onto our recovery, and that's best done in person."

Divided Responsibility

The Council Speaker is responsible for work arrangements for the 300 employees assigned to different divisions of the Council's staff. Individual Council Members determine the assignments for the 400 staff members who work for them, and they operate their district offices independently.

The Council returned to in-person deliberations June 30 to pass the city budget. In an Aug. 14 tweet, the Association of Legislative Employees, which represents the hundreds of City Council staffers assigned to individual Council Members as well as some central staff, took issue with the institution that its members were shirking their duties.

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He said he turned to an interior decorator, who figured out how to utilize the space more efficiently, but there

Continued on Page 15

Banks vows to fix 'broken' school system

Chancellor touts virtual learning

BY CRYSTAL LEWIS
clewis@thechiefleader.com

City public schools spend \$38 billion each year on educating children.

So why is it that 65 percent of black and Latino students fail to achieve reading proficiency?

That was one of many reasons why Schools Chancellor David Banks declared the school system broken during his March 2 speech at Tweed Courthouse, the Department of Education's headquarters.

Bureaucracy unhelpful

While unveiling his vision to transform schools in front of hundreds of educators and legislators, Mr. Banks criticized the layers of bureaucracy plaguing the school system and lamented the distrust parents had for public schools.

Enrollment this school year has declined to 938,000, which is 6.4 percent lower than two years ago. That drop meant that "120,000 families decided to vote with their feet and this is not the moment to be part of

alternatives and other choices" for their children," Mr. Banks stated. He introduced a plan with four pillars, the first of which will center around reimagining the student experience by offering more career and technical education, civics and financial literacy. The DOE will also launch a committee to explore ways to permanently integrate online instruction.

"Virtual learning is here to stay and has the potential to open our classroom doors to let the world in," he said.

Spotlight on Superintendents

The second pillar will focus on restoring successful programs and scaling back on bureaucracy. Mr. Banks plans to eliminate the Executive Superintendent position, which was created in 2018 under former Schools Chancellor Richard D. Huelskamp. The city would provide more authority to the city's 46 Superintendents, who will also be required to reapply for their jobs.

"If you're not part of this team and committed to finally turning around this bureaucracy that has prevented us from fixing children, this is not the moment to be part of



Schools Chancellor David Banks unveiled his vision for city public schools in front of legislators and educators at Tweed Courthouse March 2. He blasted low achievement scores among black and Latino students and declining enrollment rates despite the fact that city public schools receive \$38 billion each year.

this administration," he said.

Mr. Banks also plans to revive former Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña's learning-partners program, which encouraged schools to visit and share best practices with each other.

"Every time you get a new Mayor, you get a new Chancellor, a lot

of times the baby gets thrown out with the bathwater," he explained.

The third pillar is aimed at improving student wellness by improving school meals, facilitating more trips to museums and parks and increasing the number of School Safety Agents.

"The final leg of the plan will fo

cus on working with families to become "true partners."

UFT: Need 'concerted effort'

In a statement, United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew praised Mr. Banks's focus on better preparing students for the workforce and engaging with parents.

"We are particularly happy to hear his emphasis on making the bureaucracy work for the schools, rather than the schools working for the bureaucracy," he said. "But as we have often found, change comes slowly to the city's Department of Education. It's going to take a concerted effort to meet these ambitious goals, but we look forward to being part of the team to make this happen."

City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams and Council Member Rita Joseph, who chairs the Council's Education Committee, also voiced support for Mr. Banks's plans.

"New York City is the largest school system in the country, and we strongly believe that this reform will put us on track to be not only the biggest but the best school system in the country," they wrote in a joint statement.

Masks Off! City's school mandate ends

Some teachers say they'll keep wearing one

BY CRYSTAL LEWIS
clewis@thechiefleader.com

In another step toward a return to pre-pandemic normalcy, the city on March 7 lifted the mask mandate that had been in place since the fall of 2020, when schools shifted to remote and blended-learning.

But Brian Dornick, a Music and Special-Education Teacher at P.S. 184 in Manhattan's Chinatown, is among some educators who said they plan to continue wearing a mask while they are in the classroom.

"I know that I for one don't have any personal fear myself, but I know that I will keep my mask on in the classroom for now because I have a co-Teacher who is expecting a baby and I have a mother-in-law at home who has fighting cancer," the United Federation of Teachers chapter leader said outside of the school Monday, where he and other UFT members gathered to discuss the lifting of the mandate. "Everybody has different situations. Our students are aware of that too."

Hopes for a 'milestone day'

The UFT's president, Michael Mulgrew, said that he hoped that the day "proves to be a milestone day; that we are finally near the end of this pandemic that has caused so much damage on behalf of the children and the staff of New York City schools."

The educators urged students and staff alike to respect both those who continue to mask and those

who don't. "Most of our students are going to be keeping their masks on out of concern for the community, not for personal fears. But I think that the most important thing is respecting each other's choices," Mr. Dornick said.

Kevin Yuhas, a Math Teacher at the school, said that he plans to wear his mask when he's near students. "But I have to say that it is a breath of fresh air to be able to take this mask off when I'm alone in my classroom at my desk at a distance that's far enough from my students so that no one feels uncomfortable," he said.

Wariness remains

Still, there were reports that many educators asked students to continue wearing masks. In a letter to families obtained by the New York Post, Beacon High School Principal Bradley Smitz wrote that while Teachers "cannot mandate a mask in their classroom, they may request that students wear one as many of us have vulnerable loved ones at home."

Mr. Mulgrew emphasized that it was especially important for schools to monitor coronavirus cases as restrictions loosen so that adjustments can be made in case of a spike. Schools will continue to randomly test students and provide take-home test kits.

The city recorded 139 Covid cases among city public-school students and 79 among staff as of March 7.

UFT: 'Keep monitoring'

The union said that it consulted with hundreds of independent



These pupils at P.S. 188, The Island School, on the Lower East Side no longer have to wear masks if they do not want to and feel safe without one. The city on March 7 lifted the mask mandate for city schools, although pupils 5 years old and younger must still wear face coverings.

medical professionals about taking this next step. "Our doctors have said to us 'if you are going to be responsible in terms of getting out of a pandemic, you are going to have to go through a phase where you will loosen some of the restrictions but you must keep up the monitoring at all times and that is very important,'" Mr. Mulgrew explained.

Mayor Adams announced March 4 that mask requirements for public-school students ages 5 and up would be lifted starting March 7. But students younger than 5—who were not eligible for the vaccine—must still wear face coverings, with the Mayor citing data indicating that the youngest group was more likely to be hospitalized.

"The doctors were very clear

that they felt strongly that under five should still wear masks," Mr. Mulgrew said.

But the mandate for those under 5 could also be lifted if cases remained low. "We want to be extremely protective," Mr. Adams said. "Once we look at this number and are not getting a spike from our K-12, then we can come back and look at those younger children."

MEDICARE: Judge rules city can't charge retirees more

Continued from Page 1

union contract negotiations. Both had noted that for two decades employee raises had been limited because of soaring health-care costs.

In a statement that took a swipe at city attorneys, Mr. Mulgrew said, "While the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus plan is sound, the program has suffered from serious implementation problems and poor legal arguments, particularly on the part of the city."

Urges MLC to hold off

He continued, "Our retirees deserve better," and said the union would urge the MLC "to suspend its efforts to begin the program until all the implementation and legal issues are resolved."

Continued on Page 6

where we're going?"

He contended that "the retiree group really doesn't understand the benefits of Medicare Advantage," saying that the plan devised under the agreement between the city and the MLC "is a very good program. The plan could save money while being in a position to help retirees and active members."

Mr. Nespoli said he expected to convene a meeting of MLC officers over the next week, because "we have to evaluate what happened" before deciding on a course of action.

Retirees' attorney elated

"I guess you can beat City Hall after all," Mr. Cohen said in a phone interview, praising the "energy and dedication" the retiree group devoted to its drive against the plan, which it launched last spring, prior to a final agreement being reached on the new program in mid-July by the MLC administration and the MLC.

City and union officials found themselves responding to retiree concerns that Medicare Advantage plans in other jurisdictions had not been better than traditional Medicare, restricted retirees' choice of doctors and imposed additional out-of-pocket charges. They insisted that in designing a plan that would offer additional savings, they had nonetheless produced a

program that would be equal to or slightly better than the current Senior Care for municipal retirees who were 65 or older.

Many retirees were skeptical, however, according to Mr. Cohen, "passing along any costs of roughly 250,000 had opted out prior to Justice Frank's ruling. The \$191-per-month charge for those choosing to stay in Senior Care was viewed as the city's way of using a disincentive for staying in to get the great majority of retirees to switch to NYC Medicare Advantage Plus.

Many retirees were skeptical, however; according to Mr. Cohen, more than 50,000 from a group of roughly 250,000 had opted out prior to Justice Frank's ruling.

Judge: Can't be unequal

Justice Frank said that under his reading of the Administrative Code, "the city wasn't required to give retirees a choice of plans, and if the cost of a plan exceeded the prescribed amount, officials could 'pass along the cost above the threshold to the retiree, [but] if there is to be an option of more than one plan, that the respondent may not pass any cost

of the prior plan to the retirees." He wrote that it was his understanding that Senior Care did not exceed the threshold.

For that reason, he said, he was permanently barring the city from "passing along any costs of the new York City retirees' current plan to the retiree or to any of their dependents," and that all retirees were required to pay just a single deductible for the remainder of this year.

Mr. Cohen said the Mayor could salvage the new program "and still save \$300 million through a negotiation." It was not clear, however, that the city and the unions could work out an acceptable alternative.

However necessary savings in health-care costs were, he said, "You can't do it on the backs of retirees. They can't do it legally, and they can't do it ethically." The retirees' attorney continued, "Everybody knew [Medicare Advantage Plus] wasn't better" than Senior Care. "It was like trying to put lipstick on a pig."

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Mr. Gilbert, an unarmed getaway driver, was convicted

The Chief

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A Time to Face Facts

As of Aug. 23, the day the Food and Drug Administration gave final approval to the Pfizer vaccine, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that 76 percent of New Yorkers 18 and older were fully inoculated against the coronavirus.

Among city cops and correction officers, the numbers hadn't reached 50 percent. Emergency Medical Technicians, who are health-care workers, were only marginally better. And none of those groups, not to mention holdouts among firefighters and transit workers, seemed in a hurry to get those numbers up.

City unions have accused the de Blasio administration of failing to negotiate in good faith on terms and conditions governing vaccinations or, alternatively, weekly testing for the virus. We have to wonder, however, whether some of the labor leaders are a bit embarrassed that their members are so far behind the general public in trying to protect not only themselves but those they work with or regularly come in contact with, at a point when the Delta variant, a more-easily transmissible form of the disease, is gathering momentum.

The employe groups where the lag is greatest all have legitimate gripes with Mayor de Blasio, some of them health-related. A man who more than a year ago proclaimed, when he learned that some correction officers were being forced to work triple shifts, that this amounted to "dumb management" and would immediately end has lately been whistling past the reality that triple shifts have become more frequent in the Correction Department.

EMTs' early in the pandemic were given sole responsibility for answering medical calls that were believed to be COVID-related because it was deemed too dangerous to have firefighters respond and potentially infect every member of their firehouses. Yet their union couldn't persuade the Mayor to give them the slightly higher raises received by uniformed employees compared to civilians under a recent contract deal that's awaiting ratification.

Police Officers, whose ranks were hit particularly hard last year in the early weeks of the pandemic, objected to being criticized for not wearing masks during the street demonstrations that followed the killing of George Floyd by a Minneapolis cop 15 months ago when little was said against protesters who did the same thing. And the Mayor once again undermined his moral authority by saying the protesters were doing it in unique circumstances, as if that could justify reckless behavior. In that moment, he seemed more like a college student intoxicated with a cause than a man responsible for preserving public safety—including that part related to health.

But discontent over such treatment shouldn't cloud workers' judgment when it comes to protecting themselves. The city Health Department reported on the same day the Pfizer vaccine got full approval that more than 96 percent of virus cases since mid-January that required hospitalization, and 97 percent of deaths from the disease, involved people who hadn't been vaccinated. Those who ignore how much better the odds are of their not getting the disease or more easily weathering it should they become infected are gambling with their health, and maybe their lives.

In the process, they are also potentially jeopardizing the health of those around them. The hundreds of protesters who came to City Hall Aug. 25 to voice their displeasure with vaccine mandates seemed oblivious to this reality, and how unseemly it was for public workers, often in what are regarded as helping professions, to be taking this stand.

It's more than a bit odd to see a dissident faction of the United Federation of Teachers that has fought attempts to return to in-person classes railing against forcing school personnel to be vaccinated. The initial stance was supposed to be rooted in concern about members' safety; now the group is advocating a position in the name of personal freedom that would pose health risks to the same employees. It was also slamming UFT President Michael Mulgrew for selling out his members, when in fact he has been conspicuous among his peers for delivering the hard truths they need to hear.

Union leaders know that Supreme Court precedent is on the city's side, in the form of a 1905 Massachusetts case involving the smallpox vaccine in which it was found that a public-health emergency took precedence over the rights of an individual.

Those union leaders who say it's not their place to counsel their members that they should be inoculated seem to have lost sight of the fact that they're in those jobs not just for happy events, but to speak frankly when the need arises, because they're in a position to know more about the issues and consequences than rank-and-file workers.

They should do everything possible to safeguard employee rights, including keeping members on the clock for the time when they are inoculated or tested. But to act as if they have no choice but to indulge the holdouts at a time when we can't be sure that a flare-up of the Delta variant won't have the same drastic effect here as it's brought to many other states does a disservice to not only their other members but the public that pays for their salaries, benefits and union dues.

FOR THE RECORD

Governor Cuomo's having to resign under pressure in the face of a report commissioned by State Attorney General Letitia James that found he sexually harassed 11 women left us wondering whether he might have been able to keep his job if restorative justice, the practice established in the city school system to limit suspensions, had been applied to his situation.

We asked a couple of officials from different sides of the restorative justice debate, and got some interesting answers.

Teamsters Local 237 President Greg Floyd, who represents school Safety Agents and claims that the change has created the false impression that because suspensions are down, schools are less dangerous, said hours after Mr. Cuomo's resignation took effect, it still didn't seem like he'd resign. He's the guy in charge—he can't be allowed to get away with that.

He added, "The worst case was the State Trooper referring to the woman who Mr. Cuomo upon seeing got assigned to his protective detail despite her lacking the experience to qualify. She alleged he later harassed her, including blatant sexual touching that was witnessed by another Trooper."

"She wasn't qualified for the detail he put her in, and then he's touching her inappropriately," Mr. Floyd said.

David Bloomfield, a Professor of Education at Brooklyn College and the City University of New York Graduate Center, who's also a restorative-justice trainer, had a more-nuanced view.

He told us that restorative justice was not a "snap-your-fingers disciplinary process" but was designed to "establish community norms and mutual respect" as a way not only to resolve disputes but to avoid them.

"If Cuomo had respected the community norms, we never would have gotten into his behavior," said Professor Bloomfield, who said the conduct of which the former Governor was accused was "disrespectful at best, despicable at worst."

He said that former staffer Lindsey Boylan's initial complaint about the Governor's conduct "would have been enough to have brought about restorative-justice practices. The culture that Attorney General James cited in the report would not have been able to continue."

When we pointed out that Ms. Boylan's first allegation of sexual harassment came in a December 2020 tweet—after the most-egregious incidents involving Mr. Cuomo—Mr. Bloomfield alluded to a New Yorker article that reported she had tweeted several times going back more than a year before that about the hostile work environment the Governor and his top aides had created.

That preceded the more-notorious cases, and, the Professor said, under restorative justice would have been sufficient grounds for RMD for each one and then withdraw the total amount from one of the accounts. Is this permissible? P.S.

A: Yes, so long as your accounts are of the same type (all 403(b), all 457(b), all 401(k), all IRA). Example: Let's say your IRA RMD is \$13,000 and your 457(b) RMD is \$22,000. You may not withdraw the total of \$35,000 from one of the two accounts. You must, separately, take \$13,000 from your IRA and \$22,000 from your 457(b).

Those who think the fate of the New York Yankees hinges on who's occupying the Governor's Mansion got reasons to hope beyond their recent winning streak when Andrew Cuomo resigned, according to Eric Soufer, a political consultant who recently served as a top adviser to Andrew Yang's unsuccessful mayoral campaign. Appearing on NY1 Aug. 23, Mr. Soufer in discussing the impact of Andrew's leaving office a few hours later threw a curve-ball by calling it good news for The Bronx Bombers, since they had never won the World Series while either he or his father was Governor. Their last title before Mario took office in 1983 came five years earlier, and after he left at the end of 1994, they went to Hampden four times over the next six years. Their last title came in 2009, about 14 months before Andrew took the oath of office.

Those who believe in such things might further take heart in the fact that there's a Democrat in the White House. The last time the Yankees won the World Series during a Republican presidency was under Dwight Eisenhower in 1958. Since then, they won twice with John Kennedy in the job, twice under Jimmy Carter, four times with Bill Clinton, and once with Barack Obama.

The Mets, incidentally, won their championship with Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan as President, although Mario Cuomo was Governor for their 1986 title.

Razzle Dazzle

Cuomo Departs in a Guy Way, Not in a Shy Way

By RICHARD STEIER

Andrew Cuomo apparently concluded that Neil Young was right: it's better to burn out than to fade away.

Why, then, did his Aug. 23 farewell speech sound less like Johnny Rotten and more like his Sex Pistols bandmate, Sid Vicious, deconstructing "My Way"?

The 15-minute goodbye was a kind of compilation album, featuring greatest hits, biggest whines and tired clichés about "the COVID beast" and "New York Tough."

But the reason that few who knew him were lamenting Mr. Cuomo's departure from state government—hopefully for the final time—was that too often he was hard and nasty rather than tough.

He began with an ode to Richard Nixon's "Far be it from me to impugn my opponents' motives" misdirection, saying, "There will be another time to talk about the truth and ethics of the recent situation involving me, but let me say now that, when government politicizes allegations and the headlines condemn without facts, you undermine the justice system—and that doesn't serve women and it doesn't serve men or society."

"Of course everyone has a right to come forward, and we applaud their bravery and courage in doing so, but allegations must still be scrutinized and verified, whether made by a woman or a man."

A Sentence Full of Sophistry

This was particularly rich coming from a man whose key aides did not clap when his first accuser, former staffer Lindsey Boylan, came forward nine months earlier with a tweet accusing him of sexual harassment. Perhaps it was because their hands were otherwise occupied calling reporters in an attempt to smear her that included handing over her confidential personal file.

As to scrutinizing and verifying the allegations of the 11 women who claimed he had behaved improperly, that was what two investigators tapped by Attorney General Letitia James—acting on Mr. Cuomo's own request that she conduct an internal probe nearly six months ago—did over the course of their 165-page report. His lawyer, Rita Glavin, has since twice dissected the report for its supposed omissions and misrepresentations, but has not been able to explain the lack of effective rebuttal in his responses to the investigators.

"Facts still matter," the departing Governor said. "A fire-cracker can start a stampede, but at one point everyone looks around and says, 'Why are we running?' The truth is ultimately always revealed."

He continued, "Now there are moments that test our character, that ask us, are we the person we believe we are? You know me. I am a fighter, and my instinct is to fight this because it is unfair and unjust in my mind. But you also know that I love New York and I serve you."

Those remarks were a near-verbatim rehash of what he said 13 days earlier in announcing that he would resign. The problem was, the Attorney General's report offered compelling

Continued on Page 6

Current Pension Topics

Be Careful When Taking Your RMD Distributions

By JOEL FRANK

Q: I'm retired and about to take my first Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). I have a few retirement accounts. I plan to calculate my RMD for each one and then withdraw the total amount from one of the accounts. Is this permissible? P.S.

A: Yes, so long as your accounts are of the same type (all 403(b), all 457(b), all 401(k), all IRA). Example: Let's say your IRA RMD is \$13,000 and your 457(b) RMD is \$22,000. You may not withdraw the total of \$35,000 from one of the two accounts. You must, separately, take \$13,000 from your IRA and \$22,000 from your 457(b).

Continued on Page 5

Tax Strategies

When IRA Withdrawals Are Penalty-Free

By BARRY LISAK

Many IRA owners are aware they can be hit hard with penalty fees if they withdraw IRA money early. You should make every effort to avoid taking money out of your retirement accounts early, especially if you are young. By withdrawing money, you are losing decades of tax-free compounding, which can cost you hundreds of thousands of dollars by the time you retire. However, here are some ways to avoid that penalty on early distributions:

Permanent disability of IRA owner. Money can be withdrawn without penalty in the event the IRA holder becomes permanently disabled before age 59½. A physician must determine that, because of mental or physical disability, you are unable to engage in any gainful employment.

Death of IRA owner. If you die before you're 59½ years old, your estate and beneficiaries won't be hit with the 10-percent penalty. However, if a spouse inherits the IRA and elects to treat it as his or her own, it may become subject to the 10-percent penalty if withdrawn before age 59½.

First-home purchase. Once in a lifetime, you can take a penalty-free distribution of up to \$10,000 (\$20,000 for couples) to buy

Continued on Page 19



BRIAN BENJAMIN: Her choice for Lieut. Governor.

Hochul Sets Priorities, Discloses State Virus Toll is 12,000 Higher

By RICHARD STEIER

A day after Kathy Hochul made history by becoming New York's first female Governor while pledging "open, ethical government that New Yorkers will trust," she found herself in a more-traditional woman's role: cleaning up a mess left behind by a man.

At her direction, the state Department of Health issued revised numbers showing that 55,395 New Yorkers had died of the coronavirus as of Aug. 24—nearly 12,000 more than had been listed by Andrew Cuomo at the time he resigned shortly after midnight that day.

Part of Federal Probe

One of the subjects being examined by Federal prosecutors in Brooklyn who are investigating the disgraced former Governor is whether he manipulated death statistics regarding nursing homes to help secure a \$5.1-million advance for a memoir last year that focused on his efforts to get the pandemic under control.

"We're now releasing more data than had been released before, publicly, so people know the nursing-home deaths are consistent with what's being displayed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Ms. Hochul said in an interview with MSNBC. "There's just a lot of things that weren't happening, and I'm going to make them happen. Transparency will be the hallmark of my administration."

Those remarks represented another attempt to distance herself from Mr. Cuomo, who had excluded her from his inner circle while creating what investigators found he had sexually harassed 11 women, most of whom worked for him, described as "a toxic work environment." They detailed their findings in a report to Attorney General Letitia James three weeks earlier that eventually led to him stepping down.

Some of Ms. Hochul's priorities spelled out in

Continued on Page 17

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BEN AUGUST
Publisher
RICHARD STEIER
Editor

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EDITORIAL AND COMMENTARY

The Chief

A VOICE FOR WORKERS

BEN AUGUST
PublisherRICHARD KHAVIKNE
Editor

Albany Dems' crime problem

In 2013, as a number of wrongful conviction cases that led innocent people to be serving lengthy prison terms dating back to the 1980s and 1990s bubbled to the surface in Brooklyn, District Attorney Charles J. Hynes and his defenders played down the issue.

The defenders, usually speaking conditioned on anonymity, pointed out that some of the injustices on his watch, which started in 1990, occurred at the height of the crack epidemic, when the outcry on the streets about crime was so great that Brooklyn prosecutors weren't as vigilant

as they should have been about ensuring the right people were arrested.

This didn't make sense, since locking up the wrong people meant the guilty ones were free to continue wreaking havoc on the borough's streets.

The other rationale offered in defense of Mr. Hynes was that a handful of botched cases should not overshadow all the good work he had done during 24 years in office.

But the cases kept piling up, and more than a few of them stemmed from arrests by a single Brooklyn Detective who repeatedly relied on the same witness. Her testimony often used the language of a cop rather than the words of the drug-addled person she was, and despite her addiction, she spoke with clarity about her presence at a remarkable number of killings.

And so Brooklyn voters didn't have to wait until 2020, when current DA Eric Gonzalez released a report concluding there had been 25 past cases of wrongful convictions in which those sent away—24 of whom were people of color—served a total of 426 years for crimes they didn't commit.

Later in 2013, Democratic voters said no to a seventh term for Mr. Hynes, giving challenger Kenneth Thompson a 10-point victory in the party primary. Anyone who thought it was a case of Hynes supporters not turning out because they assumed he didn't need their help found out otherwise in November when, running on the Republican and Conservative lines, he got just 26 percent of the vote against Mr. Thompson, and Brooklyn returned to a strict no-frame policy in its prosecution

of serious crimes.

A different kind of political trouble, with a different rationale for why perpetuating injustices should not be held against them, is currently emanating from Democratic legislators who insist there is no need to amend the bail-reform law that took effect in 2020.

They argue that the egregious acts committed by people with lengthy criminal records who had remained on the street after assaulting people because their offenses were not serious enough to permit bail to be set are anecdotal evidence that doesn't stack up against the benefits of the bail-reform law in reducing incarceration.

But just as presenting tainted cases to put away innocent people for long stretches can't be justified by pointing to all the cases where the system wasn't corrupted, there is no way to excuse a law that allowed Assamad Nash, who punched a man in the eye without provocation and then was arrested for skipping a court date but again released without bail, to allegedly murder Christina Yuna Lee last month, stabbing her to death after breaking into her apartment.

Eight days after that crime, Frank Abrokva, whose 44 arrests included two earlier this year for punching different individuals in the face and head but was not locked up, approached a woman sitting on a subway bench and smacked her in the face with a bag of excrement, then rubbed the bag against her head twice more.

These and other "anecdotal" cases in which their prior offenses would have previously led to the accused being locked up, and the assumptions behind the

change, bring to mind the words of the Charles Dickens character Mr. Bumble in "Oliver Twist": "If the law supposes that, the law is a ass—a idiot."

Republican gubernatorial candidates at their recent convention made clear that they and GOP hopefuls in legislative races will use the bail-reform law against Democrats in November's elections. Democratic legislative leaders seem to believe that while they could lose some seats in the Long Island suburbs and upstate, they will still maintain comfortable majorities in both houses of the Legislature.

But as State Sen. Diane Savino—who is stepping down at the end of the year rather than seeking another term representing her Staten Island/Brooklyn district—told us March 8, "If you look at the polls, crime is the Number 1 issue, more so than COVID or taxes. When's the last time you saw that happen?"

When Senate Democrats in 2008 gained a majority in that body, ending 46 years of Republican control, they thought they would quickly consolidate their power. But a leadership battle in their ranks, a payroll tax to assist the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the first hints of corrupt behavior that eventually sent five of the six Senators at the center of the power struggle to prison ended their control after the 2010 elections.

Serious as some of those issues were, they don't draw the public's attention the way rising crime—and the sense that a flawed law steered through by one party is responsible—can. Those content to preserve bail reform as it may follow Mr. Hynes into political oblivion.

WORK RULES by Barbara Smaller



Self-insure a 'win-win'

TO THE EDITOR:

The recent announcement that Judge Lily Frank has denied the city's request to charge workers the \$191 monthly fee to continue with traditional Medicare and Senior Care merits an immediate reset.

Barbara Caress, a Professor of Health Policy at Baruch College, gave a cogent explanation on the rewards of states, municipalities

and companies who choose to "self-insure" their health-care benefits. "Self insuring" takes the cost savings from EmblemHealth and other health-care companies and gives each municipality the savings without compromising health benefits to employees and retirees. The "self-insure" concept is so popular that 48 states, including New York, have such policies in effect. Companies with 200 or more employees also choose this route in providing

THE CHIEF welcomes letters from its readers for publication. Correspondents must include their names, addresses and phone numbers. Letters should be submitted with the understanding that all correspondence is subject to the editorial judgment of this newspaper. To submit a letter online, visit thechief.org and click on Letters to the Editor.

Ron Isaac

FOR THE RECORD

ANDREW GIULIANI IS RUNNING for the Republican nomination for Governor short on money and organizational support—which could complicate his efforts to get enough petition signatures to make it onto the June 28 primary ballot—but long on name recognition and audacity.

That became clear when he began his March 1 speech at the GOP state convention in Garden City, L.I., by hailing "the party of Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, Reagan, Pataki, Donald J. Trump, and certainly in my heart last but not least, the party of Rudy

Giuliani."

He was the only one of the four candidates for Governor to mention Mr. Trump's name, and no one was intrepid enough to check the graves of Honest Abe and T.R. to see whether their bones were rattling around in response to being included in the same sentence with The Great Prevaricator.

Where the other three candidates—Lee Zeldin, Harry Wilson and Rob Astorino—all made efforts to appeal to Democrats and independents in their speeches—Andrew unabashedly addressed the Jan. 6, 2021 U.S. Capitol insurrection, which featured his father's exhortation to

Trump supporters of "Let's have trial by combat!"

"I am more proud of him today than I have ever been," he said of the former Mayor: "Rudy Giuliani stood up for the good of his democracy."

The younger Giuliani then served up more raw meat for the base, vowing in a general election faceoff to "kick Crime-Wave Kathy."

Besides being clueless on crime, he continued, "We have a Governor who is completely beholden to our Teachers union in New York."

He then pledged to double the size of the cap on charter schools statewide, and called for a tax-voucher education program to defray the

cost of sending children to private schools in New York.

It wasn't clear whether Andrew, who was an adolescent at the time, was aware that his father's call for a voucher system in the late 1990s ruptured the friendship he had with then-Schools Chancellor Rudy Crew, the only one of three public-schools leaders Rudy hadn't sought to batter into submission virtually from the time they were confirmed by the old Board of Education.

The younger Giuliani then added, "I'm sick and tired of competing with California—or maybe it feels like Venezuela—to be the highest-taxed state." He may not have

healthcare to employees.

It is long overdue for the city's Office of Labor Relations and the Municipal Labor Committee to take this bold initiative to save health-care costs while protecting health benefits.

The time to "self insure" and to combine "welfare funds" is now.

Joe Campbell

Bring back 'broken windows'

TO THE EDITOR:

With the dramatic rise in murders, rapes, felony assaults and shootings, Mayor Adams and city residents, especially those in high crime neighborhoods, have a real and dangerous problem.

I think the answer is to go back to the "broken windows" strategy first used in NYC by then-Police Commissioner Ben Ward under then-Mayor Ed Koch in the 1980s and subsequently by Commissioner Bill Bratton's NYPD, resulting in the most dramatic decrease in crime in NYC history.

Broken windows theorizes that the visible signs of crime, anti-social behavior and civil disorder create a urban environment that encourages further crime and disorder. It argues that minor crimes such as vandalism, loitering, public drinking, jaywalking, and bus and fare evasion perpetuate disorder and lawfulness.

Broken-windows policing is

See LETTERS, page 5

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IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

ROUNDPUP OF EXAMS LEADING TO JOBS

WHERE TO APPLY For further information on where to apply to civil service exams and jobs, visit the "Civil Service Exam" page at TheChiefLeader.com

Below is a roundup of New York City and State exams leading to public-service positions. Most of the jobs listed are located in the New York Metropolitan area and upstate.

There are residency requirements for many New York City jobs and for state law-enforcement positions.

Prospective applicants are advised to write or call the appropriate office to make sure they meet the qualifications needed to apply for an exam. For jobs with no written tests are given, candidates will be rated on education and experience, or by oral tests or performance exams.

The Federal Government has decentralized its personnel operations and holds few exams on a national or regional basis. Most Federal vacancies are filled by individual agencies based on education-and-experience evaluations. For information, contact the U.S. Office of Personnel Management or individual agencies, or see www.usajobs.gov.

CITY EXAMS As of August 2, 2021, all new hires must be vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus, unless they have been granted a reasonable accommodation for religion or disability. If you are offered city employment, this requirement must be met by your date of hire, unless a reasonable accommodation for exemption is received and approved by the hiring agency.

examination-related inquiries. Limited-capacity civil service examinations will also be administered at all CTCACs, except for the Bronx location.

NASSAU COUNTY EXAMS

CLOSES AUGUST 31 2063 Correction Officer #47,857 CLOSSES SEPTEMBER 21 2063 Correction Officer #47,857

CUNY EXAMS OPEN CONTINUOUSLY

2059 Campus Security Assistant #31,520 2060 Campus Peace Officer #33,825

MTA EXAMS CLOSE SEPTEMBER 28

2301 Bus Maintainer Chassis 2602 Light Maintainer

60-180CR Librarian I, Bilingual (Spanish Speaking) #56,616-57,117,533 3140 CR(D) Physical Therapist Assistant #51,968-574,207

9030 CR(D) Physical Therapist/Physical Therapist I #37,465-4140,162 9079 CR(D) Physician Assistant I #57,200-6118,707

8049 CR(D) Radiologic Technologist (General) #54,720-672,111 8050 CR(D) Radiologic Technologist (Mammography) #54,720-672,111

3707 CRD Cytotechnologist II #43,863-491,243 7094 CR(D) Cytotechnologist II #52,099-5108,383

7095 CR(D) Cytotechnologist III #66,357-6132,108 61-639CR Librarian I #43,000-661,333

5000 CR Nurse Practitioner I (Family Health) #59,507-6108,383 5000 CR Nurse Practitioner I (Gerontology) #59,507-6108,383

5007 CR Nurse Practitioner I (Neonatology) #59,507-6108,383 5008 CR Nurse Practitioner I (Obstetrics/Gynecology) #59,507-6108,383

5009 CR Nurse Practitioner I (Palliative Care) #59,507-6108,383 5011 CR Nurse Practitioner I (Pediatrics) #59,507-6108,383

5012 CR Nurse Practitioner I (Perianatology) #59,507-6108,383 5013 CR Nurse Practitioner I (Psychiatry) #59,507-6108,383

5014 CR Nurse Practitioner I (Women's Health) #59,507-6108,383 5015 CR Occupational Therapist Assistant #51,968-574,207

7288 CR(D) Occupational Therapist/Occupational Therapist I #57,095-61,286,910

2703 Drug Counselor #46,797 2705 Drug and Alcohol Counselor I #47,029

2715 Coordinator of Community Based Drug Programs #62,875 2501 Correction Officer I #42,073

2500 Assistant Highway Zone Supervisor #48,911

2511 Psychiatric Social Worker #51,260

2654 Clinic Coordinator (Drug Abuse) #60,213 2701 Drug Counselor #46,797

2705 Drug and Alcohol Counselor I #47,029 2715 Coordinator of Community Based Drug Programs #62,875

2501 Correction Officer I #42,073 2500 Assistant Highway Zone Supervisor #48,911

7512 Highway Maintenance Crew Leader #66,910

WESTCHESTER OPEN CONTINUOUSLY

06-100 Emergency Medical Technician (Basic) 02-108 Sanitarian Trainee #53,760-67,010

02-660 Water/Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator/Trainee #45,530-53,390

02-660 Water/Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator/Trainee #45,530-53,390

91-136 Paramedic (Local) 61-145 Cardiovascular Surgical Physician Assistant

02-032 Clinical Pharmacy Specialist 02-900 Health Services Coordinator #75,406-8125,410

86-102 Hospital Pharmacist 86-133 Occupational Therapist (School Districts)

86-113 Occupational Therapist (WCMC) 94-138 Occupational Therapy Assistant

93-134 Physical Therapist (School Districts) 86-115 Physical Therapist (WCMC)

03-100 Physical Therapy Assistant (School Districts) 94-137 Physical Therapy Assistant

87-116 Physical Therapist #62,875 86-117 Public Health Nurse #72,635-81,260

09-002 Radiology Information Systems Analyst 90-118 Staff Occupational Therapist

90-120 Staff Physical Therapist 87-124 Supervising Hospital

60-495 Director of Nursing (Nursing Administration) #55,647-6243,431

60-552 Director of Nursing (Maternal and Child Health) #55,647-6243,431

60-578 Director of Nursing (Ambulatory Services) #55,647-6243,431

61-140 Director of Nursing (Intermediate Care) #55,647-6243,431

61-692 Assistant Director, Juvenile Detention Center #54,929-6123,227

63-005 Director of Nursing (Extended Care Facility) #55,647-6243,431

63-055 Director of Nursing (Peri-Operative) #55,647-6243,431

63-087 Director of Nursing (Education) #55,647-6243,431

66-092 Director of Nursing (Community Health) #55,647-6243,431

66-332 Director of Nursing (Emergency Room) #55,647-6243,431

67-362 Public Health Administrator II #54,929-6123,227

67-759 Assistant Hospital Administrator #55,647-6243,431

69-388 Administrative Officer I, Bilingual (Spanish) #41,936-695,290

69-529 Assistant Superintendent of Highways for Administration #50,261-6113,240

7078 CR(D) Cytotechnologist I #43,863-491,243

7094 CR(D) Cytotechnologist II #52,099-5108,383

7095 CR(D) Cytotechnologist III #66,357-6132,108

61-639 CR Librarian I #43,000-661,333

60-180 CR Librarian I, Bilingual (Spanish Speaking) #56,616-57,117,533

3140 CR(D) Physical Therapist Assistant #51,968-574,207

9030 CR(D) Physical Therapist/Physical Therapist I #37,465-4140,162

9079 CR(D) Physician Assistant I #57,200-6118,707

UFT Applauds Remote Option

Continued from Page 12

and mental-health struggles faced by many children during the pandemic.

Low Infection Rate

NYC Test and Trace Corps Executive Director Ted Long also highlighted the low rate of COVID transmission in city public-schools during the past school year. "We proved in New York City

that the layers of protections that we had in our schools kept our students safe," he said. "In fact, when we studied this in New York City, we found that students and Teachers who were in remote learning had the same, if not a greater risk, of contracting COVID than our students and Teachers who were in-person in our schools last year."

But educators in the UFT's dissident caucuses have called for a larger-scale remote-learning option that went beyond students

who were immunocompromised.

Ali Haridopoulos, who is part of the health-justice group at the UFT's Movement of Rank and File Educators caucus, said that it would be difficult for many schools to adhere to social-distancing rules, particularly in the hallways. She was concerned that a remote option wasn't being used.

"as a mitigation to lower class sizes, particularly in older buildings with poor ventilation systems," she said.

'We the People' Sorely Tested

Continued from Page 14

have serious consequences for our society, our democracy, and our fellow workers. I have suggested ways to ameliorate those issues.

So I could continue to write about meeting the threats of which I spoke by strengthening democratic structures and processes, regulating so-called social media to eliminate the explosive spread of misinformation and outright lies, untying our Congress by eliminating the Senate filibuster, making voting easier,

reducing income insecurity by empowering workers, and reducing the influence of money in politics.

A Time for Goodbye

To me, these issues form the foundation necessary to secure our democracy. I could continually repeat them in different contexts; but I think I have said my piece.

Therefore it is time to say "farewell." I am most honored to have been allowed onto the pages that

you read. I hope my observations were useful and stimulated your thought. I am most grateful to the Chief's editor, Richard Steier, for welcoming me into this important publication for the workers of our City. His editing was flawless and his titling a joy to read. I still have that gift of hope that I wrote of earlier in this essay. You have allowed me to communicate some ways in which we can secure hope for our precious democracy. My job is done. Thank you.

TAX STRATEGIES

Continued from Page 4

or build the first home you or your spouse's child, grandchild or parent. According to the IRA rules, you are a first-time buyer if you did not own a home in the last two years. If the anticipated purchase is cancelled, put the money back into the IRA within 120 days of the distribution to avoid the penalty.

Withdrawals used to help pay unreimbursed medical expenses. In the event of serious illness or injury, Uncle Sam will waive the early-withdrawal fee on the condition that the expenses are in excess of 10 percent of your adjusted gross income. The distribution has to be in the same year as the medical expense.

For example, if your adjusted gross income (AGI) is \$80,000 and your unreimbursed medical expenses are \$10,000, the maximum amount you can distribute penalty-free is \$2,000, which is the difference between \$10,000 and 10 percent of your AGI (\$8,000).

Higher-education costs. Higher-education costs for you, your spouse, children or grandchildren

early-withdrawal penalty. You must use an IRS-approved distribution method and take at least one withdrawal annually to avoid the penalty. The payments are based on life expectancies, and generally require professional assistance to calculate.

Owe the IRS. If the IRS comes knocking on the door, the agent doesn't care where the money comes from as long as you pay it. You are allowed to take the money penalty-free to settle your tax debt.

Even though amounts distributed for the above reasons are excused from the early-distribution penalty, they may still be subject to Federal and state tax. To claim an IRA retirement money penalty exception, you may be required to file IRS Form 5329 along with your tax return.

IRA owner turns 59½. Once you have reached the qualifying age of 59½, you can make penalty-free regular withdrawals upon which to live.

Set up an annuity. You can set up a series of annuity payments from your IRA without incurring the

Barry Lisak is an IRS Enrolled Agent, meaning that he has passed special U.S. Treasury Department exams that qualify him to represent clients dealing with audits or tax-resolution cases. Any questions can be directed to him at (616) TAX-SAVE, or mbrbarrytax@aol.com.

Will Fill Jobs CITY CERTIFICATIONS

The Department of Citywide Administrative Services has certified sections of the eligible lists below for appointments and promotions in city agencies, subject to the 1-in-3 rule. Some of the appointments and promotions may already have been made.

OPEN COMPETITIVE ACCOMPANT—174 eligibles between Nos. 64 and 379 on List 8050 for 3 jobs in Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCUREMENT ANALYST—165 eligibles between Nos. 14 and 420 on List 7041 for 2 jobs in Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services.

ADMINISTRATIVE PUBLIC INFORMATION SPECIALIST—63 eligibles between Nos. 3 and 118 on List 8051 for 1 job in Teachers' Retirement System.

AIR POLLUTION INSPECTOR—256 eligibles (Nos. 1-256) on List 163 for 3 jobs in Department of Environmental Protection.

ASSOCIATE PROJECT MANAGER—262 eligibles between Nos. 1 and 361 on List 9003 for 5 jobs at ACS Automotive Service.

WORKER—149 eligibles (Nos. 1-149) on List 1180 for 3 jobs in Fire Department.

BOOKKEEPER—53 eligibles between Nos. 436 and 584 on List 8015 for 1 job at Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings.

BRIDGE OPERATOR—106 eligibles (Nos. 1-106) on List 168 for 3 jobs in Department of Transportation.

CHILD AND FAMILY SPECIALIST—58 eligibles between Nos. 56 and 190.5 on List 9022 for 3 jobs at Administration for Children's Services.

CITY PLANNER—121 eligibles between Nos. 147 and 974 on List 7002 for 1 job in HPD.

COMPUTER ASSOCIATE (SOFTWARE)—52 eligibles between Nos. 147 and 974 on List 7002 for 1 job in HPD.

COMPUTER ASSOCIATE (TECHNICAL SUPPORT)—150 eligibles between Nos. 65 and 839 on List 7003 for 1 job at ACS Vehicle Operator.

MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATOR—From List 3306; 161 eligibles between Nos. 227 and

489 for 2 jobs at ACS and 160 eligibles between Nos. 320 and 489 for 3 jobs at Housing Authority.

PRINCIPAL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSOCIATE—From List 5049; 271 eligibles between Nos. 170 and 1516 for 5 jobs in HPD and 59 eligibles in Job in FDNY.

PROCUREMENT ANALYST—7 eligibles between Nos. 707 and 820.5 on List 7019 for 1 job in Department of Consumer Affairs.

SUPERVISING SPECIAL OFFICER—17 eligibles between Nos. 6 and 263 on List 8519 for 5 jobs in HPD.

SUPERVISOR OF STOCK WORKERS—64 eligibles (Nos. 1-64) on List 110 for 1 job in FDNY.

PROMOTION ROAD CAR INSPECTOR—54 eligibles (Nos. 1-54) on List 8050 to replace 25 provisionals at NYC Transit.

ELECTRICIAN—7 eligibles between Nos. 2 and 9 on List 7515 for 5 jobs in the Department of Sanitation.

SUPERVISOR III (SOCIAL SERVICES)—43 eligibles between Nos. 1 and 56 on List 9532 for 1 job in HRA/DSS.

State Correction Officer Trainee Jobs

Continued from Page 1

individuals, make periodic rounds of assigned areas, conduct searches for contraband, maintain order within the facility, and prepare reports as necessary.

They also advise incarcerated individuals of the rules and regulations governing the operation of the facility and assist them in resolving problems. They have a high degree of responsibility for actions and decisions, and play a large role in the rehabilitative process related to the incarcerated population. Correction Officers may also be required to carry firearms.

These positions are located in various facilities throughout the state.

Traineeship

All appointees will be employed as Trainees, with positions also available for Spanish speakers.

Correction Officer Trainees must participate in and satisfactorily complete all requirements of a 12-month program before

advancing to Correction Officer. They attend a paid training program structured in a paramilitary environment at the DOCS Training Academy, living there Sunday evenings through Friday afternoons for eight weeks. The training program includes academic courses in emergency-response procedures and concepts and issues in corrections. Appointees will also receive physical training to develop fitness, strength and stamina.

They must maintain academic standing, and demonstrate proficiency with firearms and department-approved defensive-tactic techniques, obtain CPR certification and meet physical standards.

Following graduation from the academy, trainees become state peace officers and receive field training for four weeks, then be assigned to correctional facilities.

Appointees must complete a probationary period of up to 52 weeks. Upon successful completion of that period, Trainees will be appointed as Correction Officers.

Corrections Officers must be at least 21 years old, a high-school graduate or have a high-school equivalency diploma. They must be citizens and state residents. Requirements include a fitness test, a medical-standards evaluation and a substance-abuse screening.

Background Check

Candidates also will undergo a thorough background investigation to determine their suitability for appointment as a Correction Officer. Conviction of a felony will bar appointment. Conviction of misdemeanor or violations of law may bar appointment.

Potential appointees will be the subject of a thorough investigation to help determine character and fitness. There is no written test. Applicants are required to complete a training-and-experience questionnaire online. For completed information on the positions and on how to apply, visit www.cs.ny.gov/jobseeker/dashboard-start/correction-officer-trainee.cfm

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JOB HIGHLIGHT

Bus Operators start at \$25.50/hr, rising to \$36 in the sixth year

Requirements for the City Transit Authority position include a Class A or B driver's license.

Application period for the position, which include night and weekend salary differentials, paid holidays, vacation and sick leave, a comprehensive medical plan and a pension plan, run through August, with tests scheduled to begin in April. The application fee is \$68.

REQUIREMENTS: Appointees must possess a motor vehicle driver license valid in New York State for at least three years immediately prior to their appointment dates. They must also have either 1) a Class A or Class B commercial

driver's license valid in New York with a passenger endorsement and no restrictions that would preclude the performance of Bus Operator work; or 2) a learner's permit for a Class B CDL valid in New York with a passenger endorsement and no restrictions that would preclude the performance of Bus Operator work.

Those appointed under "2" above, will have their appointment subject to the receipt of a Class B CDL valid in New York with a passenger endorsement and no disqualifying restrictions at the end of the training program in bus operation. Those with serious moving violations, a license suspension or an accident record may be disqualified.

The licenses must be maintained for the duration of employment and not include any restrictions which would preclude the performance of Bus Operator work.

City residency is not required. All new city Transit Authority hires must be fully vaccinated against Covid-19. "Fully vaccinated" means having received both doses of a two-dose vaccine within two weeks having elapsed since the second dose, or having received one dose of a single-dose vaccine within two weeks having elapsed since the dose. Applicants can request medical or religious accommodation.

THE TEST: Applicants will be given a multiple-choice test, with scores

- \$125,175 09-002 Radiology Information Systems Analyst 90-118 Staff Occupational Therapist 90-120 Staff Physical Therapist 97-124 Supervising Hospital Pharmacist 99-101 Supervising Public Health Nurse \$81,598-\$135,715 97-363 Supervisor of Medical Social Work 99-102 Surgical Physician Assistant \$140,776

WESTCHESTER EXAMS

CLOSE MARCH 15 60-609 Principal Library Clerk 60-046 School District Registrar (Spanish Speaking)

65-411 Booklet and File Clerk #56,070-69,890 65-873 Staff Assistant (Mental Health) #56,070-69,890

67-552 State Assistant (Human Rights Commission) (Spanish Speaking) #56,070-69,890

67-556 Credential Specialist 69-149 Administrative Assistant

CLOSE MARCH 16 60-761 Junior Administrative Assistant 62-281 Junior Administrative Assistant (School Districts)

62-298 Senior Office Assistant (Office Management) 64-700 Administrative Aide

69-117 Senior Office Assistant—Police Department 69-248 Staff Assistant (Emergency Services) #67,010-69,890

CLOSES MARCH 17 63-640 Head Automotive Mechanic #109,785 - \$141,235

OPEN CONTINUOUSLY 06-100 Emergency Medical Technician (Basic) 02-108 Sanitarian Trainee #53,760-67,010

02-600 Water/Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator/Trainee #45,460-53,390

02-601 Water/Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator/Trainee 91-136 Paramedic (Local)

01-155 Cardiothoracic Surgical (Gerontology) #59,507-6108,383

02-032 Clinical Pharmacy Specialist 02-900 Health Services Coordinator #75,406-8125,410

86-102 Hospital Pharmacist 93-133 Occupational Therapist (School Districts)

86-115 Physical Therapist (WCMC) 03-100 Physical Therapy Assistant

94-137 Physical Therapy Assistant 87-116 Physical Therapist Assistant 86-117 Public Health Nurse #72,635-

STATE EXAMS

CLOSE MARCH 16 26-742 Program Research Specialist 3 #79,325

26-777 Associate Economist (Regulatory Economics) 26-855 Program Research Specialist 3 (Agricultural) #79,325

26-856 Program Research Specialist 3 (Criminal Justice) #79,325 26-857 Program Research Specialist 3 (Health Care Finance) #79,325

26-858 Program Research Specialist 3 (Health Systems Analysis) #79,325 26-859 Program Research Specialist 3 (Medical Assistance) #79,325

26-860 Program Research Specialist 3 (Public Health) #79,325 26-861 Program Research Specialist 3 (Human Services) #79,325

26-862 Program Research Specialist 3 (Economic Development) #79,325 26-863 Program Research Specialist 3 (Transportation) #79,325

26-866 Program Research Specialist 4 (Health Care Finance) #97,826 26-867 Program Research Specialist 4 (Health Systems Analysis) #97,826

26-868 Program Research Specialist 4 (Medical Assistance) #97,826 26-869 Program Research Specialist 4 (Public Health) #97,826

OPEN CONTINUOUSLY 20-101 Actuary Trainee (Dept. of Financial Services) #40,507-551,830

20-1 Actuary Trainee (State Insurance Fund) #40,507-551,830 20-103 Actuary Trainee (Teachers' Retirement System) #41,042-553,549

20-690 Additions Counselor I #50,722-64,557 20-691 Additions Counselor

Put Money Where Their Arms Are Give \$500 to All City Vaccinated Workers



By BOB CROGHAN

Once upon a time, in 1863, our city was greatly divided over a draft law that mandated service in the Army.

The South had passed a draft law exempting anyone who owned 20 slaves. In the North, the draft law exempted anyone who could pay a year's wages for a low-paid working man (\$300 in those days).

After Riot, a Solution

A shameful riot occurred in reaction to the unfairness of the law but, when peace had been reestablished, the city government found a way out of the problem.

Those drafted who were unable to go were given money to pay the commutation fee exempting them. Those draftees who were willing to serve were paid a bounty in gratitude for their service. Thus, an unfair law was made acceptable.

Again our city is divided over a mandate, in this case vaccination. Mayor De Blasio sought to soften the order by offering a \$500 "bounty" to those civil servants who complied, but I wish to suggest a bit more.

It seems unfair to offer money to those persons who

did not comply with the Mayor's desire earlier, yet deny those who did cooperate. Why not offer all city employees (and Transit as well) \$500 for proof of vaccination? The cost would not be small. If we are talking of 300,000 workers, a \$150-million price tag is large.

Fair Reward for Risks

We desperately need these workers to keep our city running throughout the coronavirus pandemic. A \$500 bonus for each of those workers is not a lot for their risking their lives for us. Since the authorities wish to avoid filling the hospitals with the next wave of COVID, and since they are convinced that vaccinations will do this, paying a bounty to those who comply is a reasonable use of public-health dollars.

It was the experience of the Organization of Staff Analysts that by offering a similar health-benefit award, we were able to raise the voluntary compliance rate to over 90 percent of our members.

Is over 90 percent enough? We could ask the scientists.

Editor's note: Mr. Croghan is chairman of the Organization of Staff Analysts.

This Time in Staten Island After 24-Year Absence, Albanese Eyes Council

By RICHARD STEIER

Twenty-four years after he gave up the Brooklyn City Council seat he'd held for 15 years to make his first of three runs for Mayor, Sal Albanese is looking to return to the Council, this time in Staten Island's 50th District.

And the move across the Verrazano Bridge, to borough where he notes many of his children and grandchildren live, is one that is actually less-dramatic than the way the Council has changed over the past quarter-century.

From Middle to Right

"When I was a Councilman in Bay Ridge," Mr. Albanese remarked during an Oct. 28 phone interview, "I was considered a liberal because I was in favor of gay rights, I was pro-choice."

But he fit within that largely conservative district because he was also a strong advocate for law-enforcement—sometimes too strong as far as top Police Department officials were concerned. Mr. Albanese used to go out on patrol with cops in his district once a year, and helped the late Bob O'Brien, who was then a reporter for

Continued on Page 6



Photo courtesy of Sal Albanese, via Facebook

THE COMEBACK KID? Sal Albanese, who left his Brooklyn City Council seat 24 years ago for his first of three unsuccessful runs for Mayor, is seeking to return, this time representing Staten Island, saying he was motivated largely by the way the Defund the Police movement had demonized cops in the city. The Democratic nominee has the support of most of the city's law-enforcement unions, as well as those representing other uniformed employees, the United Federation of Teachers, and Teamsters Local 237.

Letters to the Editor Keep School Agents With P.D.

To the Editor:

Recently, within two days, five guns, at least one of them loaded, were seized from students in The Bronx and Brooklyn. These weapons were discovered by metal detectors (which most schools lack and which the Department of Education has been largely phasing out for ideological reasons), reported by classmates or parents, or confiscated during altercations between students.

Students were charged with "criminal possession of a weapon" and other offenses. Whether that spat of close calls was an anomaly or symptomatic of escalating danger, it was potentially lethal.

The DOE press office issued a template reassurance that the effect that we need to have safety and officials "institute random scanning where necessary."

"Random" can mean rare and not targeted, and "necessary" has little significance because the DOE doesn't follow standard criteria.

School Safety Agents (SSAs) played a crucial role in possibly averting tragedy. Maybe they made all the difference.

Prior to when they were taken over by the NYPD 25 years ago, these unarmed peace officers had little credibility and therefore less deterrent value with at-risk students. This was not due to mere optics or their competence and readiness, but rather to the widespread skepticism that the DOE had the political will and independence to resist pressures to taking liberties with data, etc.

But serious consideration is now being given to returning the SSAs back to its control. Reacting to last week's Wild West reenactments, the New York School Safety Council, and other concerned community members held a rally in support of hiring additional SSAs and their retention under the aegis of the NYPD.

A spokesperson asked who else but the SSAs would have intervened: "Not a Guidance Counselor, not a Social Worker, not a Teacher."

The truth is that all of the above have done so out of personal heroism.

Whether they are under NYPD or DOE jurisdiction should make no difference to the SSAs, yet it does. By training and their nature, they do their best regardless of association. But the NYPD is less likely to impede their work with interference driven by ulterior considerations.

The DOE is averse to any enforcement action that can be interpreted as traditional disciplinary practice, especially by anyone wearing a uniform.

Certainly there must always be strict safeguards in-place that guarantee fair, consistent and equal treatment of all students.

But there must be no distraction from the mission of maintaining a secure environment where students can learn and also have a reasonable expectation of returning home from school each day as healthy as when they arrived.

The gun incidents were particularly dramatic and headline-grabbing. But within the same week there were also brawls with injuries involving rival bands of students in such "reputable" schools as Cardozo High School in Queens and Wagner High School in Staten Island. This spreading phenomenon can't be explained away with "kids will be kids."

Those near-misses may eventually lead not just to lessons lost, but lives lost.

RON ISAAC

Former Director of Psychological Services, NYPD

Medicare Advantage Issues

To the Editor:

The Council of Municipal Retiree Organizations (COMRO) applauds Justice Lyle Frank's ruling to restrain the City from converting us to NYC Medicare Advantage Plus. Oct. 29 issue, "Judge Cancels Oct. 31 Deadline for Retirees' Advantage Opt-Out."

We hope Justice Frank will now consider the substantive matters that this case raises.

The court needs to address the enormous burden that \$191.75 per month to continue our GHI Senior Care creates for thousands of retirees. The average Social Security benefit in America is \$16,000 a year. Many DC 37 retirees receive less than \$10,000 a year.

If the court were to opt out of Medicare Advantage Plus and remain in GHI/Senior Care, this \$191.75 a month will be about 10 percent of their combined pensions and years ago, these unarmed peace officers had little credibility and therefore less deterrent value with at-risk students.

MAP requires pre-authorizations, while Medicare does not. Gatekeepers in for-profit insurance companies needlessly delay routine procedures and tests while Medicare reviews the bills after the procedures and tests have been performed.

We experienced the needless delays and denials before we turned 65 at the hands of for-profit insurers. Being thrown back into the gatekeeper process is detrimental to retirees' health.

The possibility looms that the vital continuity-of-care process will be broken because 20-25 percent of the providers will accept Original Medicare do not accept Medicare Advantage, and many of the doctors and their staff who do accept Emblem are not fully informed.

Many retirees are asking their doctors and staff about MAP and are being told that they do not know anything about it, even though the MAP web site and information line tell us that these providers are participating.

STUART EBER
President, COMRO

Editor's note: City Labor Commissioner Renee Campion testified at the 28 City Council hearing on NYC Medicare Advantage Plus that any of the 850,000 doctors across the nation who accept Medicare will also accept the new program when it takes effect Jan. 1.

Early Vaxxers Unappreciated

To the Editor:
\$500 for municipal workers who only now will be getting their first shots? What about those of us who are city workers who got the shots when we were supposed to and spent hours online trying to get appointments.

Nothing for the people who did the right thing without constant prodding? Doesn't seem all that fair.

ELLEN WINKLER
Education Analyst,
Department of Education

Disrupt Those Giving Orders

To the Editor:
Hospital employees, EMS personnel, police, Sanitation, Correction Officers, transit workers and firefighters worked throughout the pandemic without hesitation. Yet the government has mandated that all workers must get vaccinated or face the threat of loss of employment.

Having myself been hospitalized with COVID, I chose to get vaccinated based on my own research. I believe the vaccinations work, but

Continued on Page 10

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COMMENTARY

Veterans and labor must defend VA patient care

BY SUZANNE GORDON AND STEVE EARLY

Just three years ago, while researching a forthcoming book about veterans' affairs, we attended an impromptu town hall meeting in the lobby of the Manhattan Medical Center of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

It was organized and chaired by a New York City veterans group opposed to efforts by the Trump Administration to privatize more VA services, locally and nationally. But for the most part, this speaker-out was a totally unscripted open-mic event. Any patient or family member who happened to be passing by was free to raise any criticism or concern about the care they were receiving.

Instead, one speaker after another offered moving testimonials to the VA and praised the dedication and skill of their hospital caregivers. The most common message we heard was: "the VA saved my life."

Now it's time for those same veterans and their organizational allies to help save the VA itself from a new threat. On Monday, March 14, new VA Secretary Denis McDonough proposed a long-term, nationwide restructuring of VA services, that would downsize the

direct care role of its Manhattan and Brooklyn Medical Centers. At the same time, McDonough wants to send more VA patients to private doctors and hospitals, even where in-house VA care is readily available, more cost-effective and of higher quality.

During his 2020 presidential campaign, Joe Biden, McDonough's boss, was singing a different tune. He accused Donald Trump of trying "to privatize and dismantle the VA." He promised that he would never "defund" the nation's largest public healthcare system, which provides treatment that is "specialized, supportive, and second to none." Nevertheless, during Biden's first year in office, \$18 billion—or 20 percent of the agency's entire clinical budget—was spent on for-profit hospital chains, private medical practices, and other outside contractors.

This costly and wasteful outsourcing trend has accelerated since 2018 when Congress handed Donald Trump one of his biggest bipartisan victories—the VA Mission Act. As MISSION Act foes, like Bernie Sanders, former chair of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi predicted at the time, diverting billions of dollars from

VA direct care to outside providers had undermined a system serving nine million veterans, including 250,000 in the NYC area.

Adding insult to injury, the Biden Administration is now asking a MISSION Act-created Asset and Infrastructure Review Commission to shrink the number of VA medical centers and community-based care centers around the country. If implemented, this plan will adversely affect access to care in places where the private health-care industry is not well prepared to treat more veterans, like the additional victims of the VA hospitals in Manhattan and Brooklyn, and the American Federation of Government Employees, which has more than 100,000 members in VA facilities around the country. As part of the VA's role as a backup system during public health emergencies, NNU and AFGE members have, over the past two years, also cared for many non-veterans in areas, like NYC, where non-VA hospitals were swamped.

Labor critics of McDonough's plan include National Nurses United, which represents 600 RNs at the VA hospitals in Manhattan and Brooklyn, and the American Federation of Government Employees, which has more than 100,000 members in VA facilities around the country. As part of the VA's role as a backup system during public health emergencies, NNU and AFGE members have, over the past two years, also cared for many non-veterans in areas, like NYC, where non-VA hospitals were swamped.

Among those who will be adversely affected by further VA outsourcing are the many NYC municipal workers who served in the military. Some use the VA, in addition to

their own union negotiated health coverage, and then lean more heavily on the VA when they retire from city employment. The unions representing VA care-givers—which include, in other parts of the country, SEIU and the National Federation of Federal Employees (an affiliate of the Machinist Union)—are now better coordinating their resistance to privatization and this new facility closing threat. Both locally and nationally, their campaign to save the VA, as a model public healthcare system, deserves strong support from the rest of organized labor, which includes more than one million veterans in its ranks nationwide.

Suzanne Gordon is a co-founder of the Veterans Healthcare Policy Institute and author of many books about nursing and healthcare. Her forthcoming book, "Our Veterans," co-authored with Steve Early and Jasper Craven, will be published in July by Duke University Press. Both Gordon and Early are members of the CWA NewsGuild and Early was, for 27 years, a staff member of Communications Workers of America District 1, which is headquartered in New York City. They can be reached at Lsupport@aol.com

LETTERS

Continued from Page 4

ecuted and sentenced to as much time in prison as they tried to give the innocent person.

I have no problem with programs that will rehabilitate those who can be reformed. But those who commit horrific crimes should be removed from society. This includes police or prosecutors who frame innocent people, since that is truly a horrific crime.

Also, the March 11 Daily News features a story about Harvey Marcellin, who was convicted in the 1963 murder of a girlfriend, got out of prison and was convicted of manslaughter in the stabbing death of another girlfriend in 1985.

Now, at the age of 83, Marcellin has been arrested for the murder of another woman. So once AGAIN, what is this about people aging out of crime?

Richard Warren

A very modest proposal

To THE EDITOR:
Since the efforts to reduce violent crime in NYC by Mayor Eric Adams seem to be falling miserably, partly because of misguided progressive policies on bail reform and the refusal to arrest and prosecute

perpetrators of violations and misdemeanors by career criminals (even the reluctance of police supervisors to accept reports of minor offenses), I suggest a novel solution.

My solution is along the lines of the great satirist, the writer Jonathan Swift ("A Modest Proposal"), and the musician Tom Lehrer. I suggest that the NYPD stop making any arrests (they become social workers), and we open up our prisons and let every prisoner go free. Before this is done, we have to arm every citizen and provide them with adequate firearms training. The idea is to let each citizen protect himself and herself.

NYC will save a great deal of money since we won't need correction officers, and most prosecutors and criminal court judges can be laid off. Furthermore, what "justice" occurs will be swift and at least partially effective, and we can eliminate all that constitutional and legal squabbling that wastes so much time and money.

Let's give it a chance. What do we have to lose? Besides, such an experiment will be exciting!

Michael J. Gorman
The writer is a retired NYPD Lieutenant and an attorney.

NONPROFIT: Workers seek comparable wages

Continued from Page 1

nonprofit staff was \$34,000, with full-time employees earning \$40,000 on average.

Nonprofit workers typically earned \$20,000 less than municipal employees performing similar job duties with fewer fringe benefits, the report found. About 75 percent of the city's 80,000 nonprofit workers were people of color; 55 percent were women of color.

Most non-union

The Human Services Council of New York, which organized the rally and represents 170 nonprofit providers, called on the city to end the pay disparity by providing annual cost-of-living raises and establish a minimum wage of \$21 an hour. Workers also advocated for the establishment of a fund that included a wage and benefits schedule for nonprofit employees that was comparable to those given to city employees.

Most of the nonprofit employees are not unionized. But Hector Garrido, the executive director of District Council 37, which represents 17,000 employees working at daycare, home-care and mental-health facilities, was among those demanding a prevailing wage.

Many workers pointed out that they often used the same services they refer to their clients. The Center's

report found that 20 percent of human-services workers received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, for instance.

Council Member Carmen de La Rosa, who chairs the Civil Service and Labor Committee, noted that "if we want our city to have the solutions to the multiple crises that we are facing right now," human services workers can be paid fairly.

City Council Member Althea Stevens worked in the social-services sector for 20 years, including spending

anything about the demand for food pantries, homeless services and mental-health counseling increased during the pandemic.

Increased demands during Covid

City Council Member Althea Stevens worked in the social-services sector for 20 years, including spending

found that 20 percent of human-services workers received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, for instance.

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LABOR AROUND THE NATION

NEWS IN BRIEF

ILLINOIS

Workers who use marijuana could gain job protections

Lawmakers in Illinois are looking to pass legislation that would protect workers who use marijuana from being fired or disciplined. Although the state legalized cannabis for those 21 or older back in 2019, employees who must undergo drug testing and use medical or recreational marijuana risk losing their jobs.

A bill sponsored by State Rep. Bob Morgan would prohibit employers from refusing to hire or firing those who have a positive drug test for cannabis "unless the test result exceeds limits set forth in certain DUI provisions of the Illinois Vehicle Code." The proposed legislation passed in the Illinois House of Representatives March 3, and must now go through the Senate.

The proposal also includes safety exceptions for those who carry guns, handle hazardous materials or operate heavy machinery on the job.

The lawmaker estimated that nearly one million Illinois residents use marijuana.

"We should allow people to make good choices and not be discriminated against in the workplace because of those choices as long as it's not affecting the workplace," Mr. Morgan said.

State Rep. Dan Ugaste opposes the bill. "I think we're overstepping a little too quickly just to make certain someone can enjoy themselves on the weekend," he said. — C.L.

NEW YORK

New York City REI is first to unionize

Workers at a New York City outpost of outdoor clothing and equipment seller REI voted overwhelmingly to join a union—the first REI store to do so—amid efforts from workers at other big companies to do the same.

The National Labor Relations Board said March 3 the vote in SoHo neighborhood was 88-14 in favor of being represented by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union.

"History was made today! We're excited to welcome the workers of REI SoHo into the RWDSU," said union President Stuart Appelbaum in a statement. "With a seat at the table, workers can make working at REI safe and sustainable for years to come," he said.

In a statement after the vote, REI said, "As we have said throughout this process, REI firmly believes that the decision of whether or not to be represented by a union is an important one, and we respect each employee's right to choose or refuse union representation."

Seattle-based REI has more than 170 locations across 41 states and Washington, D.C.

— Associated Press

NATIONWIDE

IRS seeking 10,000 workers amid tax return backlog

The U.S. Internal Revenue Service is looking to hire 10,000 new employees to address a backlog of millions of tax returns.

The paper piles include 10 million individual tax returns and four million business tax returns going back to last year, as well as eight million other pieces of mail.

"The IRS has been granted Direct Hire Authority for roughly 10,000 entry-level positions in submission processing and accounts management, presumably to help address concerns that the agency's hiring process is difficult and slow," said National Treasury Employees Union President Tony Reardon.

Hiring was expected to run through Dec. 31, 2023. The IRS shifted 1,200 employees from other jobs to help address the backlog through September.

But Chad Hooper, president of the Professional Managers Association, which represents non-union employees, was concerned that a similar plan to hire 5,000 customer-service workers has so far resulted in just 200 hirings.

"It's unclear where the IRS believes these future employees are," he said. — C.L.

MINNESOTA

Teachers on strike after failing to reach contract



Minneapolis teachers and supporters picket outside a school in Minneapolis, on Tuesday, the first day of their strike. Teachers walked off the job in a dispute over wages, class sizes and mental health support for students coping with two years of the coronavirus pandemic, at least temporarily pausing classes for about 29,000 students.

BY STEVE KARNOWSKI
Associated Press

Teachers in the Minneapolis School District walked off the job Tuesday in a dispute over wages, with about 34,000 students, announced a tentative agreement late Monday night to avert a strike that had also been scheduled to start Tuesday.

Union officials in both cities said the issues were largely the same. The St. Paul teachers union said their tentative agreement—subject to approval by members—includes maintaining caps on class sizes, increased mental health supports and pay increases.

National labor leaders say teachers and support staff across the country are experiencing the same sorts of overload and burnout challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but no other large districts were on the verge of a strike. School district officials have said they're already facing budget shortfalls due to enrollment losses stemming from the pandemic and can't spend money they don't have.

The school district called the news disappointing but pledged to keep negotiating. Callahan

said the union was also willing to resume bargaining, but no talks were scheduled.

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The possibility of a strike earlier weighed on parents already stretched by the disruption of the pandemic.

Erin Zielinski's daughter, Sybil, is a first-grader at Armatage Community School in south-

west Minneapolis. She and her husband support the teachers, though she said she worries whether the union's requests are sustainable.

Zielinski said her family is fortunate. She and her husband can count on support from their parents during a strike, and while he has had to return to the office, she still has some flexibility to work remotely. Her plan if teachers strike? "Survival," she said and laughed.

"You kind of become immune to it, between distance learning, and home school, it's now a way of life, unfortunately," she said. "My husband and I will piece it together."

Minneapolis has about 3,265 teachers, while St. Paul has roughly 3,250 educators. The average annual salary for St. Paul teachers is more than \$85,000, while it's more than \$71,000 in Minneapolis. However, the districts also employ hundreds of lower-paid support staffers who often say they don't earn a living wage, and those workers have been a major focus of the talks. The Minneapolis union is seeking a starting salary of \$35,000 for education support professionals, with union officials saying it's essential to hire and retain people of color.

NATIONWIDE

New offices for the hybrid era?

If you build a shiny new office building, will your employees show up to work in it?

Many U.S. companies are banking on it because they believe working in person is better for collaboration and training young employees. So even though most employees are still working from home offices and dining room tables today, some companies are willing to spend big on showplace headquarters.

Businesses recognize there is a place for offices despite the fact that they plan to give workers more flexibility to work from home and might see cost savings from limiting their real estate holdings.

The number of people working remotely is clearly growing because so many companies learned they could do it during the pandemic.

The Society for Human Resource Management estimates the number of totally remote U.S. workers will double to roughly 36 million people by 2025.

But the CEO of that trade group, Johnny C. Taylor Jr., said that will still only account for a little over 20 percent of the workforce. The other nearly 80 percent will work in an office at least part of the time.

But so far businesses have been slow to bring employees back. An average of 36.8 percent of the workforce was back in offices during the fourth week of February in 10 major U.S. cities monitored by Kastle Systems, which tracks building access-card swipes. That number has been creeping up since early January when it fell as low as 29 percent during the omicron surge.

— Associated Press

NATIONWIDE

Covid's grip on economy is fading

In a buoyant sign for the U.S. economy, businesses stepped up their hiring last month as omicron faded and more Americans ventured out to spend at restaurants, shops and hotels despite surging inflation.

Employers added a robust 678,000 jobs in February, the largest monthly total since July, the Labor Department reported last week.

The unemployment rate dropped to 3.8 percent, from 4 percent in January, extending a sharp decline in joblessness to its lowest level since before the pandemic erupted two years ago.

The hiring figures were collected before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has sent oil prices jumping and has heightened risks and uncertainties for economies in Europe and the rest of the world.

Yet the February hiring data suggest that two years after COVID-19 sparked a nationwide shutdown and 22 million job losses, the disease is losing its grip on America's economy. More people are taking jobs or searching for work—a trend that, if it endures, will help ease the labor shortages that have bedeviled employers for the past year.

A continuing flow of people back to offices could boost employment in urban downtowns. And the number of Americans who are delaying job hunts for fear of the disease fell sharply from January, when omicron was raging, to February.

Consumer spending has risen, spurred by higher wages and savings. Restaurant traffic has regained pre-pandemic levels, hotel reservations are up and far more Americans are flying than at the height of omicron.

Still, escalating costs for gasoline, wheat and metals such as aluminum, which are exported by both Ukraine and Russia, will likely accelerate inflation in the coming months.

— Associated Press

Lyft, Uber, others launch anti-union ad campaign

Uber, Lyft and other companies that use independent contractors have banded together to combat efforts by Democratic lawmakers and advocates that would allow the workers to unionize.

The Wall Street Journal reports that the companies will run ads on television and online spotlighting workers who say they favor the independent-contractor model for its flexibility.

The companies' endeavor follows the introduction of legislation and other efforts at the federal level and in statehouses to reclassify the contractors as employees, with the protections afforded traditional employees.

The app-based companies use independent contractors to keep their labor costs and their prices down. Other members of the industry association, called Flex, also include DoorDash, Gopuff, Grubhub and Instacart.

"Workers are voting with their feet and are flocking to



Drivers for Uber and Lyft during a 2019 rally near Los Angeles International Airport protesting what they say are declining wages as both companies rake in billions of dollars from investors. The two companies and others are banding together to head off lawmakers' efforts that would grant the drivers certain employee protections.

app-based work because it gives them better work-life balance," Kristin Sharp, Flex's CEO, told The Journal. "Our big-picture goal is to ensure that people who

want to be flexible can do so," she said.

Flex said it will spend more than \$1 million on the ads.

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 By CRYSTAL LEWIS clewis@thechiefleader.com Updated Feb 28, 2022

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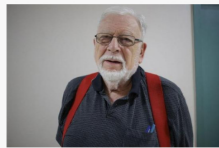
News of the Week



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 By CHRIS HEDGES Updated 4 hrs ago
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 By CRYSTAL LEWIS clewis@thechiefleader.com Updated 4 hrs ago
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 Mar 1, 2022

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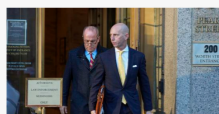
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 By RICHARD STEIER rsteier@thechiefleader.com Updated 4 hrs ago
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By RICHARD STEIER Updated Mar 1, 2022
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Retirees rallied in February near City Hall in opposition to a proposal by officials to shift to a health-care consortium-run Medicare Advantage plan from a Medicare plan run by the city. Comptroller Brad Lander last week said he lacks "sufficient information" to register the contract for the plan, dealing it yet another setback.

Comptroller returns Medicare plan to Adams administration

City comptroller Brad Lander said he lacks "sufficient information" to register the contract for a controversial Medicare plan for city retirees, dealing the proposal, already beset by widespread ...

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Students and members of the Professional Staff Congress held a rally in Albany March 23 to call for additional state funding to address broken elevators, water leaks and the presence of vermin, all of which they said are common problems at the City University of New York's aging campuses.

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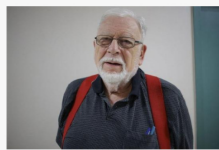
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The greatest evil is war
 By CHRIS HEDGES Updated 4 hrs ago
 Preemptive war, whether in Iraq or Ukraine, is a war crime. It does not matter if the war is launched on the basis of lies and fabrications, as was the case in Iraq, or because of the breaking...



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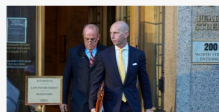


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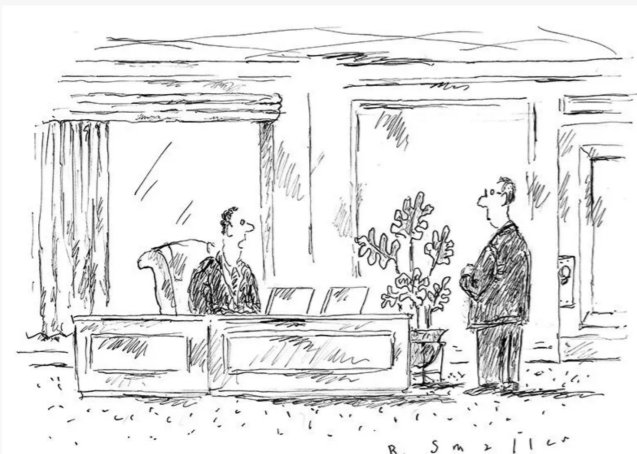
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NYPD can't side with Amazon

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The Police Department, perhaps unwittingly, got involved in a labor dispute Feb. 23 when officers were summoned to Amazon's Staten Island faci...

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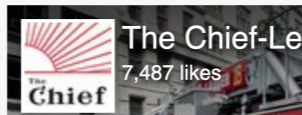
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Teacher hopeful of turning the tide at the UFT

For veteran teacher Camille Eterno, safety concerns for her fellow educators during the coronavirus pandemic were what prompted her to run to become the United Federation of Teachers's next ...



Unions, lawmakers give 'Clean Slate' a final push

Elected officials and civil rights and union leaders rallied last week at the New York State Capitol building in an effort to push Governor Kathy Hochul and legislators to include the Clean Slate Act ...



Doula, midwife programs will expand to address city health-care inequities

As a German-trained midwife with 22 years of experience, Stephanie Heintzeler has experienced firsthand the inherent differences in maternal healthcare as it is practiced here and in other ...



Museum of Natural History workers holding union election

More than 180 employees at the American Museum of Natural History are seeking to unionize, reflecting a recent wave of cultural institutions organizing over the past few years. An in-person election ...



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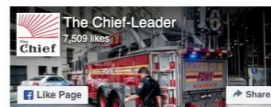
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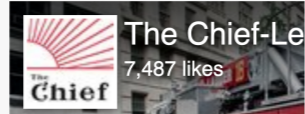
Two unions representing rail workers have sued in Federal court over Amtrak’s vaccination mandates. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the International Association of sheet Metal, Ai...

Democrats Reintroduce Public-Worker Organizing Bill

House Democrats this week reintroduced a bill that would prohibit localities and states from hindering government workers from organizing. The Hill reported.



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The mayor’s swing and a miss

To The Editor: Mayor Eric Adams seems to have the problem of many election winners. Once taking office, he acts like a politician. Suddenly, the skepticism he had for the ...

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To The Editor: As a former NYPD detective and former assistant district attorney, it is apparent to me that public officials can implement common sense reforms to end New York City’s crime wave, but ...

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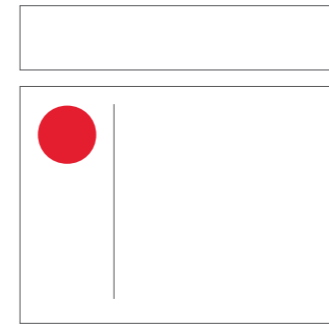
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