



# MONDAY ALERT

New York State Alliance *for* Retired Americans

800 Troy Schenectady Rd., Latham, NY 12110 | 518-783-6231 | [www.newyorkstateara.org](http://www.newyorkstateara.org)

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## **NYS Alliance for Retired Americans Endorses Governor Kathy Hochul, Attorney General Letitia James and Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli for Re-Election**

*Organization Representing More Than 600,000 Older New Yorkers Cites Responsibility to Support Outstanding Leadership in Unprecedented Times as Basis for the Action*

ALBANY - The NYS Alliance for Retired Americans (NYSARA) has announced its first-ever statewide endorsements, recognizing the importance of standing in support of the re-election campaigns of Gov. Kathy Hochul, Attorney General Letitia James and Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli.

“NYSARA does not make endorsements lightly. With current federal actions putting basic human decency, the norms of the U.S. Constitution and our democratic values at serious risk, we are compelled to stand strong with leaders who have demonstrated commitment and integrity on behalf of all New Yorkers,” said NYSARA President Barry Kaufmann.

“Governor Hochul, Attorney General James and Comptroller Di Napoli are all champions for older New Yorkers, in word, vision and action,” he said. “NYSARA is proud to support them and we will work vigorously so they can continue their efforts.”

Governor Hochul has advanced the well-being of older New Yorkers through her commitment to the innovative programs and outreach of the NYS Office for Aging. NYSOFA delivers resources and direct support to seniors in all 62 New York counties. It also helps coordinate services and support for older New Yorkers via other state agencies and local government offices, with professionalism that is second to none nationally.

The Governor’s focus on affordability in housing, health care and daily living

strikes a responsive chord with NYSARA members in an economy that has sustained devastating federal attacks undermining health care coverage, access and stability, poor economic policy choices like tariffs, and a horrific war that is driving gas prices skyward.

The Governor's initiatives to lower auto insurance costs are also a welcome effort for NYSARA.

Attorney General James runs one of the nation's premier law enforcement agencies seeking to ensure the well-being of all New Yorkers on a daily basis. Her efforts lead the nation in organizing Legal resistance to misguided federal policies and unconstitutional overreach that undermine the civil rights of New Yorkers and other Americans and attempt to erase the norms of our society.

Her office also shields older New Yorkers with a priority focus and resources to stop consumer fraud, particularly online scams on social media platforms powered by artificial intelligence and to hold perpetrators accountable. This is an increasing area of concern for NYSARA and its members.

Comptroller DiNapoli continues to serve with distinction as the state's top fiscal watchdog. His audits shed light on the path to better government practices, identify malfeasance, and help to save New Yorkers millions of dollars.

As sole trustee of the New York State Retirement System, he has set the national standard for a well-run fund. The integrity and resilience of the Retirement System under his watch has produced results that measure up against the strength of any public fund. Older New Yorkers like NYSARA members, know, respect and trust Comptroller DiNapoli.

NYSARA represents more than 600,000 older New Yorkers across the state including retirees of NYSUT, CSEA, PEF, AFSCME District Council 37, NYSNA, UAW and other AFL-CIO unions along with other community-based organizations. NYSARA is the largest affiliate of the 4.4 million-member national Alliance for Retired Americans.

### **Additional Background Information about NYSARA's Endorsed Statewide Officials**

#### **Governor Kathy Hochul**

**Background:** Born in [Buffalo, New York](#), Hochul graduated from [Syracuse University](#) in 1980 and received a [Juris Doctor](#) from the [Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law](#) in [Washington, D.C.](#) in 1984. After serving on the [Hamburg Town](#) Board and as deputy [Erie County](#) clerk, Hochul was appointed Erie County clerk in 2007. She was elected to a full term as Erie County clerk in

2007 and reelected in 2010. In May 2011, Hochul won a four-candidate [special election](#) for New York's 26th congressional district, becoming the first [Democrat](#) to represent the district in 40 years. She served as a [U.S. representative](#) from 2011 to 2013, and was narrowly defeated for reelection in [2012](#) by [Chris Collins](#) following [redistricting](#).

In the [2014 New York gubernatorial election](#), Governor [Andrew Cuomo](#) selected Hochul as his running mate; after they won the election, Hochul was inaugurated as lieutenant governor. Cuomo and Hochul were reelected in [2018](#). Hochul took office as governor of New York on August 24, 2021, after Cuomo resigned amid [allegations of sexual harassment](#). She won a full term in [the 2022 election](#) against Republican U.S. Representative [Lee Zeldin](#) in the narrowest New York gubernatorial election since [1994](#).

- Running mate 2026: [Adrienne Adams](#), former Speaker of the [New York City Council](#) (2022–2025) from the [28th district](#) (2017–2025) and candidate for [mayor of New York City](#) in [2025\[15\]](#)

### ***Likely Republican General Election Candidate***

- [Bruce Blakeman](#), [Nassau County Executive](#) (2021–present)[87]
  - - Running mate: Todd Hood, [Madison County](#) sheriff (2018–present)

(Source Wikipedia)

### **Attorney General Letitia James**

**Background:** She has served since 2019 as the 67th [attorney general of New York](#) (NYAG), having been first elected to the post in [2018](#). A member of the [Democratic Party](#), James is the first Black person to serve as New York attorney general and is the first Black woman to hold statewide office in New York.

Born and raised in [Brooklyn](#), James graduated from [Lehman College](#) in [the Bronx](#) before obtaining her [Juris Doctor](#) degree at [Howard University](#) in [Washington, D.C.](#) She worked as a [public defender](#), then on staff in the [New York State Assembly](#), and later as a New York State Assistant Attorney General in the Brooklyn regional office.

James served as a member of the [New York City Council](#) from 2004 to 2013. She represented the [35th district](#), which includes the Brooklyn neighborhoods of [Clinton](#)

Hill, [Fort Greene](#), parts of [Crown Heights](#), [Prospect Heights](#), and [Bedford–Stuyvesant](#). James chaired the committees on economic development and sanitation and served on several others. From 2013 to 2018, she was the [New York City Public Advocate](#), making her the first African American woman to be elected to and hold citywide office in New York City.<sup>[2]</sup>

James earned a [Master of Public Administration](#) degree in 2013 from [Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs](#) (SIPA), located in the [Morningside Heights](#) section of Manhattan.<sup>[17]</sup> She later served as Columbia University's William S. Beinecke Visiting Professor of Public Policy in the Faculty of International and Public Affairs.<sup>[18]</sup>

(Source Wikipedia)

## **Republican primary Candidates Declared**

- Khurram Dara, regulatory and policy attorney<sup>[6][7][8]</sup>
- [Saritha Komatireddy](#), former federal prosecutor<sup>[9]</sup>

## **Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli**

**Background:** Serving as the 54th and current [New York State Comptroller](#) since 2007.<sup>[3]</sup> He was elected by a bipartisan majority of the [New York State Legislature](#) to the position of comptroller on February 7, 2007.<sup>[4][3]</sup> He was then elected comptroller by New York's voters in 2010, 2014, 2018 and 2022.<sup>[3]</sup> In his 2014 and 2018 re-election victories, he received more votes than any other candidates for statewide office. As of 2022, he is the second longest-serving comptroller in New York history.<sup>[5]</sup>

DiNapoli previously served as a [New York State Assemblymember](#) for the 16th district in northwestern Nassau County, first elected in 1986. He served 20 years in the Assembly.<sup>[3]</sup> During his tenure, he chaired the Environmental Conservation Committee, the Local Governments Committee, and the Governmental Operations Committee.<sup>[6]</sup>

Raised in [Albertson](#) on [Long Island](#), DiNapoli has been active in politics since he was a teenager, when he ran for and won a position as a trustee on the [Mineola Board of Education](#).<sup>[1]</sup> At the age of 18 in 1972, he was the youngest person in New York State history elected to public office.<sup>[10]</sup> He served on the [school board](#) for 10 years.

In 1976, DiNapoli graduated [magna cum laude](#) from [Hofstra University](#) with a [bachelor's degree](#) in history.<sup>[10]</sup> After college he worked for [New York](#)

[Telephone](#)<sup>[1]</sup> and [AT&T](#). In 1988, he received a [master's degree](#) in human resources management from [The New School University](#)'s Graduate School of Management and Urban Professions.<sup>[10]</sup>

#### Potential Democratic Primary opponents

- Drew Warshaw, nonprofit executive<sup>[6][1]</sup>
- Adem Bunkedekko, former nonprofit executive and candidate for [NY-09](#) in [2018](#) and [2020](#)<sup>[7]</sup>
- [Raj Goyle](#), former [Kansas state representative](#) from the 87th district (2007–2011) and nominee for [KS-04](#) in [2010](#)<sup>[8][1]</sup>
- The New York Working Families Party declined to endorse any candidate despite previously nominating DiNapoli for over two decades. Instead, the party have nominated a "placeholder candidate" for their ballot line, who will later be replaced by whichever candidate wins the Democratic nomination.<sup>[19]</sup>

#### ***Likely Republican General Election Candidate***

- Joseph Hernandez, biotechnology entrepreneur<sup>[20]</sup>

(Source Wikipedia)

## **Central New York Chapter of NYSARA Helps Launch Statewide Stop the Scam Campaign**



## What is AI

**How It Works:**

- Trained on large amounts of real human data
- Learns patterns in how we speak and write
- Creates new content that sounds or looks real

**Examples of AI Today:**

- Chatbots that answer questions
- Voice assistants like Siri or Alexa
- Social media algorithms that choose what you see

**Why It Matters:**

- AI can fake voices, messages, and videos
- That makes scams harder to recognize

New York State Alliance for Retired Americans  
Education, Advocacy, Activities



NYSARA's Central New York Chapter launched the organization's priority statewide campaign to deliver important information to seniors about the risk of online scams powered by artificial intelligence and what each of us can do about it. It was the first of many public presentations that NYSARA expects to deliver in every part of New York in the months ahead.

NYSARA President Barry Kaufmann led the presentation and discussion with an enthusiastic group of NYSARA members at NYSUT's office in Syracuse.

NYSARA Central NY officers Bill Spreter, Deb Beware, Kathy Zabinski and Lori Nilson are pictured with Kaufmann.

According to the FBI, cybercrime cost Americans 50 and older nearly \$5 billion in 2022.

More broadly, AARP estimates that financial exploitation costs victims 60 years and older an astonishing \$28.3 billion annually.

Financial scams all have one thing in common: they prey on an individual's trust to obtain information that can be used to steal money, property, and other assets. But trusted organizations – banks, government agencies, legitimate businesses, charities – don't call, email, or text "out of the blue" to ask for your personal information.

Always verify independently with a trusted source whenever receiving such requests: by using a website or phone number you know to be legitimate.

Older adults can protect themselves starting with 1) broader education about common scams and how to reduce online risk, 2) sharing true stories of their experiences, 3) supporting measures to ensure that all who have a hand in the fraudulent activity are held accountable for both their actions and inaction in the face of widespread evidence, 4) understanding what to do if you are a victim of a scam, and 5) understanding there are tools that currently exist to identify scams/fraud before they happen.

***For More information about protecting yourself and how you can help share important information with***

***others:*** <https://retiredamericans.org/stopthescam/>

## State Updates

***State Budget Updates:*** As budget negotiations continue, lawmakers in Albany have passed a second one-week budget extender which will keep the state government running through April 14 as leaders continue to negotiate on key budget items. The major issues in contention are changes to the 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, reforms for car insurance, and updates to the state's environmental review process (more below.) More information from [City & State](#).

***Albany Advocacy Needed:*** Please take action to amplify aging priorities in the state budget:

- Join your colleague by [signing on to the Age Strong Campaign here](#).
- Call your State Assemblymember - [See toolkit with call instruction here](#) this has been updated to ask the Assemblymembers to meet the Senate proposal of 25m in the one house budget and fight for inclusion in the final enacted budget.
- Post to social media - [Some suggested posts/tweets are here](#).

**Resident Assistance Program:** The Senate included \$2M for a Resident Assistance pilot in its one-house proposal but advocacy will be needed for this initiative. Actions include:

- Send and circulate the [advocacy letter](#) to lawmakers
- Amplify on social media, tagging key legislative leaders
- In housing, [post this flyer](#) to engage residents, staff, and community members

**JustPay Human Services Workforce:** The Human Services Council's #JustPay campaign is seizing the opportunity created by the latest budget extender to redouble its push for a 4% Targeted Inflationary Increase (TII) for all human services programs. [Email your legislators](#) urging inclusion of the full 4% investment and use HSC's [manager outreach toolkit](#) to mobilize your teams.

**SEQRA Reform:** The state legislature is likely to pass SEQRA reform, which would unlock faster affordable housing development, in some capacity, and Gov. Hochul has repeatedly emphasized her support for overhauling the legislation. Our partners at Unlock NY's Future Coalition have written a [draft letter](#) to send to legislators in support of SEQRA reform, and are calling for legislators to boost the size of developments that would qualify for the exemption to meet demand, especially in areas outside of New York City.

**Home Care Transparency Act:** New York Caring Majority is urging community members to make calls to state legislative leadership to urge them to include the [Home Care Transparency Act](#) in the final budget. [More details here.](#)

## **Medicare Prior Authorization Pilot Program Challenged in Lawsuit**

Last week, the Electronic Frontier Foundation [filed a lawsuit](#) against the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) challenging the Administration's "Wasteful and Inappropriate Service Reduction" (WISeR) prior authorization pilot program.

Unlike Medicare Advantage, traditional Medicare has not required prior authorization for patients or physicians. But [the WISeR pilot program](#) changes that by replacing physicians' medical determinations in six states – Arizona, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, and Washington – with an artificial intelligence (AI) prior

authorization process managed by for-profit corporations. CMS pays these corporations a fee based on the number of medical procedures denied, resulting in higher payments for an increased amount of denials.

Since the WISeR program took effect in January, doctors and patients in the affected states have reported delays, denials, and longer wait times. Lawmakers in the U.S. House and Senate have [introduced legislation](#) that aims to ban AI-assisted prior authorization processes completely from traditional Medicare in the future.

“The WISeR prior authorization pilot gets between doctors and patients and breaks a fundamental promise of traditional Medicare,” said Robert Roach, Jr., President of the Alliance. “Congress must intervene and stop for-profit AI corporations from making money by blocking care that doctors order for their patients.”

[Click here to download our WISeR fact sheet.](#)

## **Voting Rights Update: Massachusetts Alliance Wins Dismissal in Voter Data Case, Florida Alliance Challenges Voter ID Requirement**

The Massachusetts Alliance [scored a win](#) on Thursday when a federal district court dismissed a lawsuit from the Department of Justice (DOJ). DOJ officials filed the lawsuit to try and force state officials to turn over sensitive, unredacted voter registration data to the federal government. The Massachusetts Alliance joined the New England State Area Conference of the NAACP to intervene in the case last year, and filed a motion to dismiss in February.

Last week, the Florida Alliance [joined the](#) Florida State Conference Of Branches and Youth Units of the NAACP to file a lawsuit challenging a new state voter identification bill signed into law by Governor **Ron DeSantis** (FL).

The [law requires](#) Floridians to present proof of U.S. citizenship in order to register to vote and remain on the voter rolls, mimicking provisions in federal legislation – the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE America) Act – currently being pushed by President **Donald Trump** and Republicans in Congress.

The lawsuit argues that this new requirement will create an unnecessary obstacle that unfairly excludes and violates the rights of millions of Florida voters.

“This latest effort from the Florida Alliance is another great example illustrating how Alliance members have stepped up to stop voter suppression measures,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “We are – and always will be – ready to protect Americans’ constitutional right to vote.”



Left: Allegheny/Fayette Central Labor Council President John Galuska, Pennsylvania Alliance President Mike Crossey, Alliance Consultant Marissa Whitehouse, State Representative Dan Frankel, State Representative Jessica Benham, and State Senator Nick Pisciotano at Pittsburgh town hall, Right: Pennsylvania Alliance Vice President Kathy Black hears a question from Pennsylvania Alliance member Jean Kamara at Philadelphia town hall

## Alliance Field Staff Addresses IUPAT Retirees

Field Manager **Tommy McLaughlin** met with International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT) District 9 retirees in New York last week and traveled to Connecticut to speak with IUPAT District 11 retirees in Connecticut on Monday. **McLaughlin** spoke about the Alliance’s “Stop the Scam” campaign, the current state of Social Security, and how to organize with state Alliance chapters, including opportunities for members to get more involved locally. Speakers at the District 11 meeting included **Bill Candelori**, who is overseeing the IUPAT Retiree Committee, former IUPAT General President **Jim Williams, Sr.**, and Connecticut Alliance President **Bette Marafino**. The IUPAT joined the Alliance [as a new affiliated union](#) last month.

## ***KFF Health News: Can I Opt Out of Having My Doctor Take Notes With AI?***

**By Katherine Ruppelt, Nashville Public Radio and Cara Anthony and Blake Farmer, Nashville Public Radio**

Family physician Eric Boose has been using an artificial intelligence tool to get back to what he calls “old-fashioned medicine” — talking with patients face-to-face, without having to type into a computer at the same time.

“I can really just sit there and engage and just focus on them and listen,” said Boose, who practices at Cleveland Clinic.

Roughly two years ago, he started using an AI notetaker app during patient visits. The tool listens while he talks with patients and then automatically generates a visit summary based on the conversation. The summary is usually ready within seconds after the appointment ends.

“It’s taking care of all that tedious work of charting and taking notes during the visit,” he said. “It’s just freeing up a lot more time to get that done, and I can get home to

my family earlier.”

Nearly a third of physician practices are using AI scribes and others are working to add the tool, in an effort to cut down on administrative work.

