

Mayor's Column

July 2, 2018

New York's 213 Legislators closed up shop last week in Albany and headed home to gear up for the next election.

Surprisingly, it ended with a whimper, devoid of the usual end session deal making.

The session will probably be most notable for what didn't get done, rather than what did. A dead locked Senate, resulting from a Republican lawmaker going back on active naval duty, contributed to the vote deadlock.

Bills that both houses could agree on now await the Governor's signature to be enacted into law:

- A long stalled bill to create a panel to investigate prosecutorial misconduct was finally passed. An eleven member panel will now have broad authority to investigate prosecutors accused of wrongdoing.
- Ticket Scalping – Stub Hub and Seat Geek will now have to clearly post that they are second hand sellers, not connected directly to the venues. In addition, if selling speculatively for tickets they don't actually possess, a 100% refund must be given if tickets are not forthcoming.
- Truly copying our own Village's groundbreaking Restorative Justice Program, the state would dedicate asset forfeiture revenues for programs that aid those in the criminal justice system with substance abuse and mental health issues to be placed in diversion programs as opposed to being combined with the general prison population.
- Cashless Tolls – The state can no longer suspend one's vehicle registration for the failure to pay cashless tolls in a timely manner.
- Water Use Rate – This particular bill was personally championed by our Board of Trustees in coalition with neighboring communities. It would require water works corporations (SUEZ) to provide water use data by property address to municipalities for purposes related to "use" consumption as opposed to only property tax funding for clean, storm or drinking water infrastructure improvements and services.

A vast majority of initiatives this Legislative season never made it out of committee. The following would have impacted the Village for good and for ill and will be monitored as they will most likely be up for continued discussion in the 2019 Legislative term.

Condominiums and Cooperatives

The proposed bill would have amended Real Property Law so that market value, rather than the rental income producing stream would become the valuation method for condos and coops.

Cellular Services

Legislation would have authorized cities and villages to join New York City in imposing a gross receipts tax on mobile telecommunication services to augment the current taxation on land lines only.

Employment

Language would have prohibited employers statewide from being able to ask prospective hires about their salary history.

Prevailing Wage

Bill would have subjected all projects financed, in whole or in part, by local governments to prevailing wage.

Teacher Evaluation

Bill would have decoupled annual teacher evaluations from state mandated test scores.

Economic Development

Legislation would have required more oversight on the billions of dollars that the state spends to try and boost its economy including the creation of a “Database of Deals” that would publicly display how much the State was sending to private companies for job creation programs.

Gun Control

Legislation would have allowed family members, school officials and teachers to initiate court proceedings to try to remove guns from one's home if they are found to be a danger to themselves or others.

Interest Rates

Law would have eliminated the current fixed interest rate of 9% on any judgments against a municipality vs tying it to market rate, thus removing the incentive for plaintiffs to delay proceedings and also put New York in conformity with other states.

Plastic Bags

Initiative would have prohibited the use of carry out plastic bags for sale to customers and impose fees designed to reduce the use of single use plastic bags.

This was a good year for Mark Twain based on his beliefs, "No man's life, liberty or property are safe while the legislature is in session."