

Here are some of the issues we'll be tracking in the year ahead.

Paid Sick Time

The big announcement coming out of Governor Cuomo's State of the State address was that he will be looking to pass legislation to mandate paid sick time for all workers in the State. While many important details remain unknown, we do know the proposal would call for:

- 5 days of paid sick time for businesses employing between 5-99 employees.
- 7 days of paid sick time for businesses that employ 100 or more.

Westchester County and New York City already have paid sick leave mandates in place, it is not known if the Governor's proposal would alter these in any way. We also do not know if this will be completely employer funded or if this will more closely mirror the paid family leave which is paid for through employee deductions. We will provide clarity on these important questions in the coming months.

Polystyrene Ban

One environmental issue that has already come to the fore and we expect to continue to be a part of the political dialogue in 2020, is a statewide polystyrene (Styrofoam) ban. Many regions across the State already have a ban like this in place, but the Association has expressed some concerns over the proposed legislation.

- Some of our members still use polystyrene and we want to see language included that would allow them to apply for a hardship waiver if alternatives prove to be too costly.
- We are also asking that any statewide bill passed on this issue preempt all local legislation that has already been passed. This way, every restaurant in the State has the same rules in regard to these products.

Gig Economy

An issue that gained momentum toward the end of last year but didn't end up passing the legislature was a proposal that would have reclassified contractors as dependent workers. The measures would force companies like Uber, Lyft and Grubhub to begin providing benefits to their employees. If passed this would dramatically change the business models for these companies, bringing an unknown variable to the brick and mortar restaurants they currently do business with.

Alcohol in Movie Theaters

One of Governor Cuomo's major objectives during his tenure has been to promote and elevate New York's craft beverage industry. One way he is attempting to do this is by opening revenue streams that didn't previously exist, the latest effort being to allow movie theaters to begin serving alcohol to patrons. Similar proposals have been discussed in the past and the NYS Restaurant Association has always taken the position that as long as movie theaters aren't looking to operate as a bar without being classified as one this was ok. The details of this bill will be important and dictate what position the NYS Restaurant Association will take.

E-bikes and Scooters

Last year, the NYS Restaurant Association supported legislation that would have legalized e-bikes and scooters as many delivery drivers use these modes of transportation to perform their jobs. Unfortunately, the Governor vetoed the bill as he felt the final legislation did not meet the safety concerns he had. This legislation will be altered and reintroduced this year and we are hopeful to get it over the finish line this time around.