



NEWS RELEASE

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TALE OF THE TAPE: NYPIRG 2017 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

As part of NYPIRG’s ongoing review of legislative activity, this analysis examines the 2017 New York legislative session to date. This analysis does not analyze or draw conclusions on the substance of bills or the overall legislative output, since “productivity” is more complicated and subjective than objective numbers. It is up to New Yorkers to assess the Legislature’s effectiveness and impact. In order to be informed, however, New Yorkers deserve information on the functioning of their Legislature and we hope that the following information will stimulate dialogue between lawmakers and their constituents.

NYPIRG’s *updated* legislative profiles, which includes information on lawmakers’ roles in the legislature, their outside income (if any), most recent election results, their significant campaign contributors, and partisan and demographic information for their districts, is also available at <http://www.nypirg.org/goodgov/LegislativeProfiles/>.

Unless otherwise noted, the following information is based on data compiled by the Legislative Bill Drafting Commission. Numbers are subject to revision in the event of a special or extraordinary session taking place before the end of the calendar year. Note that 2017 is the first year and the non-election year for the 2017-2018 Legislature.

2017 saw a decline in the number of “same-as bills” passed by both houses and was among the sessions that saw the least number of legislative agreements as evidenced by identical bills passing on the floor of both houses. This decrease is consistent with the overall historical trend: Fewer “same-as bills” are being passed.

As seen in **Chart 1**, the number of bills passed in 2017 represents another year of decline in this metric. The decline in the number of bills that passed in the 2017 session tracks the overall historical trend. Since 1995, the five years that saw the fewest bills pass both houses are 2009, 2012, 2013, 2016 and 2017. An examination of the number of two-house bills passed over a longer period of time, legislative actions by governor since 1920 (**Chart 2**), makes the historical trend quite clear: Legislative agreements have declined over time.

Chart 1: Bills Passing Both Houses 1995-2017

Year	Passed Assembly Jan-July	Passed Senate Jan-July	Passed both Jan-July	Passed Assembly Full Year	Passed Senate Full Year	Passed both Full Year	Number of bills introduced in both houses during 2 year session
2017 ¹	998	1896	606	TBD	TBD	TBD	15406
2016	1041	1752	618	1041	1752	618	16649
2015	1065	1637	718	1065	1637	718	
2014	1143	1460	658	1143	1460	658	15971
2013	1071	1408	650	1071	1408	650	
2012	1056	1256	571	1056	1256	571	15945
2011	999	1289	677	1001	1291	679	
2010	1196	1124	700	1210	1143	716	18079
2009	1242	640	554	1256	694	588	
2008	1641	1794	811	1645	1822	830	18294
2007	1531	1770	847	1538	1828	861	
2006	1961	1842	958	1965	1848	963	17770
2005	1628	1603	882	1630	1619	890	
2004	1702	1522	777	1793	1607	879	17214
2003	1403	1366	761	1408	1374	768	
2002	1654	1294	745	1654	1314	755	16892
2001	1283	1050	549	1394	1149	662	
2000	1537	1424	711	1537	1424	711	16995
1999	1470	1317	607	1586	1412	732	
1998	1547	1369	674	1563	1391	694	16106
1997	1132	1234	475	1469	1408	758	
1996	1580	1543	813	1585	1558	830	15670
1995	1362	1401	776	1362	1407	782	

Chart 2: Comparing Passage of Two House Bills During Gubernatorial Administrations 1920 through 2017²

Governor	Average Two House Bills per Year
Miller	908
Smith 1923-1928	936
FDR	1047
Lehman	1214
Dewey	1189
Harriman	1289
Rockefeller	1356
Wilson	1348
Carey	1041
Cuomo, M.	942
Pataki	785
Spitzer	861
Paterson	711
Cuomo, A.	643

¹ As of July 18, 2017

² Historic totals from 1920 through 1994 were obtained from the New York State Red Book.

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Messages of Necessity use continues to be less frequent than in years past.

In the seven single year legislative sessions of Governor Cuomo's tenure, an average of 13.1 bills have passed both houses per year on an expedited basis through use of a message of necessity, compared to his immediate predecessors the Spitzer/Paterson Administration (41) and the Pataki Administration (89.2).

Chart 3: Annual messages of necessity, 1995 through 2017

Year	Bills Passing With Either House with Message of Necessity
2017	15
2016	13
2015	10
2014	17
2013	3
2012	5
2011	29
2010	57
2009	43
2008	41
2007	23
2006	39
2005	34
2004	84
2003	58
2002	102
2001	80
2000	83
1999	118
1998	100
1997	109
1996	144
1995	119

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Little change in the number of bills approved by the governor, but the trend is that the use of vetoes by this governor has increased during his tenure.

As seen in **Chart 4** below, in 2016 there had been little change in the number of bills approved by the governor and his actions track those of his most recent predecessors. Note the combined total of bills that have been approved or vetoed does not exactly match the total number of bills passing both houses. Due to the governor's line-item power, many appropriation bills fall into both categories. Note regarding the 2017 legislative session: Most of the bills passed came in the flurry of June, 2017 activity and the many of those bills have not yet been acted upon by the governor.

Chart 4: Percentage of two-house bills approved or vetoed, 1995 through 2017³

Year	Chaptered	Vetoed
2017	331	5
2016	519	99
2015	589	133
2014	552	109
2013	558	87
2012	505	61
2011	610	68
2010	567	150
2009	507	79
2008	652	177
2007	691	164
2006	750	219
2005	770	119
2004	750	132
2003	755	69
2002	698	55
2001	591	70
2000	609	101
1999	657	70
1998	656	46
1997	686	69
1996	721	94
1995	694	83

³ As of September 16, 2017.

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Legislative activity by month.

Legislative activity increases each month that lawmakers are in session, culminating with the overwhelming number of bills being approved in the final scheduled session month of June. Note that March is the biggest month for campaign fundraisers, coinciding with the run up to the acknowledged deadline for budget passage by April 1st.

Chart 5: Monthly legislative and campaign fundraising activity, session 2017⁴

Month	Senate passage of bills	Assembly passage of bills	Campaign fundraisers ⁵	Number of scheduled session days
January	53	23	13	9
February	46	31	29	5
March	123	72	84	17
April	46	25	5	6
May	200	166	22	12
June	1446	687	30	11

Constitutional Amendments

Two proposed amendments to the state Constitution were advanced for voter approval this session.⁶

Chart 6: Annual approvals of constitutional amendments, 2002 through 2017

Year	Constitutional Amendments Passing Both Houses
2017	2
2016	2
2015	0
2014	0
2013	8
2012	6
2011	2
2010	1
2009	2
2008	1
2007	5
2006	3
2005	3
2004	1
2003	2

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⁴ These month-to-month totals when aggregated for the session exceed the amount in Chart 1 because some bills are recalled and can be approved a second time.

⁵ List of 2017 fundraisers collected by NYPIRG. Fundraiser information was collected from cooperative lobbyists, thus may not include all fundraisers. Does not include fundraisers held within lawmakers' districts, does include all known fundraisers held in Albany and by the governor, legislative leaders and political parties anywhere in the state.

⁶ The state Constitution requires that before a proposed constitutional change can be sent to voters for consideration, the identical proposed change pass each house in two concurrent two year legislative sessions.