

August, 2021



# The Call Box

Official Newsletter of the Florida  
Fraternal Order of Police,  
Lodge NY 3100



## President's Message

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Editor - Harvey Feit  
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Stanley Kriegsman  
561-703-5846

Hope you are all enjoying this beautiful summer, even though it is always summer in our new home state.

A reminder, our first meeting of the fall season will be on September 23 at 7 PM and will be held at the Boynton Beach FOP Lodge. The address is 1200 Miner Rd. in Boynton Beach. Arrive a little early to partake in a sandwich dinner. Also, you can help with the set up of the room and the takedown when we disburse. Our June meeting was a big success and we plan to repeat that time frame during the year ahead.

There has been much being passed around about the changes to the health care benefits for the NYPD. I realize that there are many other departments that have membership in our lodge and I apologize if the airwaves have been clogged by the specifics of these changes. A great portion of our membership is retired NYPD and I feel obligated to pass on the information to those affected. That said there is information contained within these pages addressing the same issue.

It will not be long before we will be campaigning for your dues renewals. We will be sending out notices, as we did last year, and hopefully we will get a great return. It is a long process, and a lot of work, so please when you get the notices return them as soon as possible. There will be no increase in our dues, they remain at \$50.

Before we know it the holiday season will be upon us. I know it is a little early to start celebrating but it is not too early to start making plans. Our annual holiday bash, which was cancelled last year, has been scheduled for December 8 and will once again be held at Benvenuto's in Boynton Beach. There is more information in the CallBox. In any case set the date aside and join us.

There has not been much of a change for our sisters and brothers who are protecting and serving the communities who want to defund them. We need to keep them in our prayers for they are the peacemakers as we once were. God please protect them and God Bless America.

*ARNIE DANSKY*

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## **Associate Lodge of Lodge NY 3100**

Dr. Paul Bonheim, Radiology, 516- 448-2314

Dr. Robert Carida, Cardiologist, Delray Beach, 561-499-2585

Dr. Jeffrey M. Cohen, Cosmetic Dentist, 561-967-8200

Dr. James Devoursney, Dermatology, Boynton Beach, 561-752-8000

Dr. David C. Hellman. Gastroenterology, W. Palm Beach, 561-733-0379

Dr. Steven Mautner, Dentist, Margate, 954-978-8866

Dr. Daniel McGuire, Gastroenterology, Boynton Beach, 561-738-5772

Dr. Sirtaz Sibia, Ophthalmology, Boynton Beach, 561-752-0075

Jarred Smoke, Insurance, Boynton Beach, 561-244-7700

Dr. Richard Montag, Boynton Beach 516-236-3002

Dr.Jorge Torrejon, Dentist 561-374-7990





# Municipal Labor Committee

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan**

The City and the Municipal Labor Committee (MLC) recently announced an agreement to implement the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan, a customized program for City retirees, beginning January 1, 2022. The City and the MLC recommend that retirees strongly consider the new premium- free plan with improved benefits, which represents real value for our retirees.

### **What is the new NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan?**

The City and the Municipal Labor Committee (MLC) have been working together to offer a unique customized large group Medicare Advantage plan that will provide better member benefits for NYC retirees at lower costs to the City.

### **Is the retiree program still premium-free?**

Yes. The NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan replaces the current GHI/EBCBS Senior Care program, which is a supplement to traditional Medicare, as the program that is premium-free to all Medicare-eligible retirees. All other plans will still be available as a pay-up option. Retirees that choose to stay on their current plan will now pay the additional premium difference.

### **What is the start date for the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan?**

The start date is January 1, 2022.

### **How does the New Plan Work?**

The NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan replaces both traditional Medicare and a Medicare Supplement plan with a single integrated program administered by an insurer approved by Medicare. Through a contract with Medicare, the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan provides all health care services previously covered by original Medicare and supplemented by the Senior Care program. The Plan must follow Medicare rules and provide all benefits provided by Medicare. The new Plan will also add some important new benefits not covered by the current Senior Care plan, including:

- transportation costs for 24 one-way trips per year to doctors' offices;
- home meals delivery for patients after they are discharged from the hospital;
- a fitness program;
- a wellness rewards program;
- \$0 copay telemedicine with the *LiveHealth* platform.

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**Can I go to my current doctors and hospitals?**

Yes. The NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan is a Group Medicare PPO, which does not restrict access to providers. Retirees can go to any doctor or hospital that accepts Medicare of which there are now approximately 850,000 Medicare providers nationally. About 640,000 of those Medicare providers are currently in the Empire/Emblem Alliance networks and are contractually bound to see NYC Medicare Advantage Plus members. Providers that are not contracted with the plan would bill the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan to get reimbursed, like they do for traditional Medicare. It doesn't make a difference if that provider is in the insurer's network or not. As long as the provider takes payment from Medicare, they can bill the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan and be paid the same amount as traditional Medicare pays. This includes all the hospitals in the NYC area including Memorial Sloan-Kettering (MSK) and The Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS), almost all hospitals nationally, and 99.5% of all doctors

**What if the provider I am seeing does not agree to accept payment from the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan?**

In the very rare instance where a provider that accepts Medicare tells a retiree they will not accept payment from the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan, the retiree should first contact the concierge service that will be provided so that the plan can work with the provider to make sure they understand it is the same payment schedule and billing protocol and answer any questions the provider may have. If despite that effort, the provider still refuses, the member can pay the provider and then submit the claims to the plan for reimbursement. So long as the service is a Medicare covered benefit and Medicare fee schedule is followed, the member will only be responsible for their copays/coinsurance as defined by the plan.

**Who will provide the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan?**

After careful consideration, the City and the Municipal Labor Committee selected an alliance between Empire BlueCross BlueShield and EmblemHealth to provide the program. This provides continuity and familiarity for the majority of employees and retirees who are currently enrolled in the City's CBP and Senior Care programs that are offered by the same insurers. EmblemHealth will continue to administer the Part D rider.

**What do I have to do?**

If you are a retiree covered by a City Medicare health plan, you will be automatically enrolled in the new Plan for January 1, 2022. You don't have to do anything. However, you must be enrolled in Medicare Part A and Medicare Part B and continue to pay your Medicare Part B premiums.

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**Can I choose another plan or is the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus plan my only choice?**

You can choose to remain on your current plan by opting out of the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus plan during the opt-out period between September 1 – October 15. By opting out of the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus plan, you will be responsible for the full premium difference between the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus plan and your plan's cost. You will receive information about the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus plan and opt-out process in mid-August.

**Will this be the only time I can opt in or opt out?**

No, the City will be offering an Annual Transfer Period.

In the past, transfers between plans were only permitted every other year. Beginning in 2022, transfers between plans will be permitted every year in the Fall.

**Will the City still reimburse my Medicare Part B premium?**

Yes.

**As a member of the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan, do I need a referral to see a specialist?**

No.

**Do any services require preauthorization?**

Yes. Just like the plans for active City employees, some medical procedures will require preauthorization under the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan. When you see an in-network provider, the doctor and the insurer will handle the preauthorization. When seeing out-of-network doctors, while prior authorizations are not required, we recommend you ask your provider to request a prior authorization to confirm that the services they are providing will be considered medically necessary and covered.

**What if I live out of state?**

The program is a national program so it covers retirees in any State in which they work or reside and when they travel. To be eligible for NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan, members must live within the 50 states or any US territory, including Puerto Rico.

**Must I have a Medicare Part D prescription drug rider through the NYC Medicare Advantage Program?**

If you do not receive prescription drugs through your union welfare fund, you may purchase the prescription drug rider for the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan. This Part D prescription drug plan rider will be the same as the one offered through EmblemHealth for the Senior Care program. If you choose not to take any Part D coverage, you may be subject to a permanent penalty in the future. If you have purchased individual Part D coverage, enrolling in the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan will result in disenrollment from your individual Part D plan. You would need to obtain prescription drug coverage through your union or the City Part D prescription drug plan rider.

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**What happens where the retiree or spouse is under age 65?**

As they do today, the retiree and spouse have to choose an insurer that offers both an over 65 option and an under 65 option. The over-65 member will be automatically enrolled under the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan and the under-65 member will be in the Empire GHI/CBP plan, both at no cost to the retiree. If, for example, the retiree chooses to pay up to remain in the HIP VIP plan, the under 65 spouse will be enrolled in the HIP HMO for non-Medicare eligible participants at no cost. If the retiree chooses to pay up to remain in another pay up plan, the under 65 spouse will pay up to remain with the same insurer.

**I have surgery scheduled for January 3rd with my current carrier. What should I do?**

The NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan clinical transition team will work with you and your doctor to ensure continuity of care.

**What happens if I go into the hospital in December and I'm not discharged until January?**

The insurer that was in place at the time of the inpatient admission will be responsible for the entire inpatient stay. If that was traditional Medicare and GHI/Empire Senior Care, they would be responsible for the claim for the entire stay.

**Where can I call for more information about the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan?**

As of July 26, 2021, there is a special call center **(1-833-325-1190)** established for the NYC Medicare Advantage Plus Plan to answer all your questions.

The call center hours of operations are Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET, except holidays. You will also be receiving extensive materials in mid-August that explain the details of the plan and the enrollment process. In addition, there will be retiree meetings available all over the NYC area in September, as well as webinars for those who prefer not to attend in person meetings. Keep checking this website for additional information.



Updated 7/26/2021

**Please Note**

This only effects NYC Retirees and spouses on Medicare. The NYC Police Unions have stated that all Union Health and Welfare Benefits provided by the Unions would be continued by them i.e. eyeglasses, dental, etc.

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Dear Fellow Sergeant,

A decision has been made regarding the impending NYC OLR Medicare Advantage Group Plan Request for Proposals.

The Medicare Advantage Plan has been awarded to "The Alliance," a coalition comprised of Emblem Health and Blue Cross. The Municipal Labor Committee (MLC) is scheduled to approve this plan next week. This new Medicare Advantage Group Plan is scheduled to be implemented January 1, 2022.

The NYC Office of Labor Relations will be mailing communication materials and plan selection forms in the near future. Medicare participants will have the option to remain in traditional Medicare (GHI-Senior Care) or HIP-VIP after agreeing to pay a monthly premium cost.

Please review the attached presentation, which describes the new Medicare Advantage Plan as contrasted with the current GHI-Senior Care program.

Please Note: This plan change "does not" in any way affect the annual Medicare Part B reimbursement or the IRMAA. This change does not affect any SBA provided (Pharmaceutical, Dental, Optical) benefits.

Fraternally,

Ed Mullins  
President  
Sergeants Benevolent Association

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ed Mullins'.

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**Subject: Late Breaking News Regarding NYC Medicare Advantage**

The city confirmed they will allow Aetna as a buy up option. We'll know how much (price) that Aetna will charge within the next coming weeks. Our understanding Aetna will be accepting new members!  
We Will keep you guys updated!

**RETIRED LIEUTENANTS' ASSOCIATION**



**ATTENTION EVERYONE!!!**

I just spoke with a representative for Jumaane Williams, who is the Public Advocate for NY City.

It was heavily suggested that ALL of us contact their office in GIGANTIC numbers right away to voice our concerns about this Medicare Advantage fiasco. We need EVERYONE who belongs to this group page to contact this office ASAP. Here is the contact information:

The hotline is (212) 669-7250 and they call you back to do an intake.  
The text number where you can leave a text that will be read is at (833) 933-1692.  
The email address is [gethelp@advocate.nyc.gov](mailto:gethelp@advocate.nyc.gov)

**PICK UP YOUR LANDLINES, CELLS, AND OPEN YOUR EMAIL! Flood this office TODAY and for the next two days! ALL HANDS ON DECK. We can do this!!!!**

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Good Day

In response to your Inquiry please be advised that at this time the NYC PBA has received information that the NYC is encouraging Medicare eligible retirees to change over to a newly approved by NC Medicare Advantage Plan which is not one of the previously offered plans. This Advantage would administer both the Medicare and the secondary benefits with one card and give the member a Medicare D Plan for prescriptions. Med D would then be the primary prescription coverage the PBA/Caremark plan would be secondary and reimburse your copayments. The members would not be losing any coverage, it is merely a change in coverage.

In August NYC is sending information to elect the Advantage Plan or stay with your current coverage. If you elect to stay with your current coverage a premium will be charged. These change are supposed to take effect 1-1-2022.

You can click the link included below to see the full information to date on the New advantage plan from NYC.

<https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/497-21/mayor-de-blasio-commissioner-campion-new-improved-health>

As to your inquiry regarding legal action at this time. The City of New York both pays for and administers the Health and Hospital coverages for all of our members. Neither the active member or retired member dues pay for any of the benefits. NYC by contract is required to provide benefits for life for our members however than can make changes to these benefits as may be required. The PBA Health and Welfare Fund acknowledges that these changes may cause frustration for our members the City of New York will be making these changes to our members benefits. At this time however the NYC PBA will not be issuing any official statements.

Paul Kelly | Member Services | PBA Health and Welfare Funds Office  
PBA Funds Office | 125 Broad Street 11th Floor, New York, NY 10004  
Email: [pkelly@nycpba.org](mailto:pkelly@nycpba.org)

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## WHEN COPS RETIRE...

When a good cop leaves the 'job' and retires to a better life, many are jealous, some are pleased and yet others, who may have already retired, wonder. We wonder if he knows what he is leaving behind, because we already know. We know, for example, that after a lifetime of camaraderie that few experience, it will remain as a longing for those past times. We know in the law enforcement life there is a fellowship which lasts long after the uniforms are hung up in the back of the closet. We know even if he throws them away, they will be on him with every step and breath that remains in his life. We also know how the very bearing of the man speaks of what he was and in his heart still is.

These are the burdens of the job. You will still look at people suspiciously, still see what others do not see or choose to ignore and always will look at the rest of the law enforcement world with a respect for what they do; only grown in a lifetime of knowing. Never think for one moment you are escaping from that life. You are only escaping the 'job' and merely being allowed to leave 'active' duty.

So what I wish for you is that whenever you ease into retirement, in your heart you never forget for one moment that 'Blessed are the Peacemakers for they shall be called children of God,' and you are still a member of the greatest fraternity the world has ever known.

POLICE FRIENDS: Will forward this..

There are those who think they understand.  
And then . . . There are Cops

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## Save The Date

Good Morning,

We will be having an in-person event on Saturday, September 11<sup>th</sup> at 8:30am at our Patriot Memorial (12300 Forest Hill Blvd). The event will last approximately 1 hour and will honor the lives lost and affected by the 9/11 event. We hope that FOP NY3100 will join us again, for this important community event.

Thank you,

Michelle Garvey

Michelle Garvey, CPRP, CDM | Assistant  
Community Services Director | Village of  
Wellington

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## Man smashes bottle over NYPD cop's head in 'unprovoked attack'

By [Tina Moore](#), [Craig McCarthy](#) and [Bruce Golding](#)

July 19, 2021 | 3:39pm | [Updated](#)

An ex-con wearing a tie-dye T-shirt split a cop's head open with a glass bottle on a Brooklyn sidewalk, and told the officer and his partner, "I'm going to kill you" when they busted him, authorities alleged Monday. The officer's body-worn camera captured the sneak attack early Sunday morning, which left the cop with multiple gashes to the head and neck that had to be closed with surgical staples and stitches, the NYPD said.

[Man smashes bottle over NYPD cop's head in 'unprovoked attack' \(nypost.com\)](#)

A 22-second clip posted on social media shows the cop was smoking a cigarette near a parked NYPD cruiser with flashing lights when a young man in a rainbow-colored shirt emblazoned with the words "FEED YOUR DREAM" inside a triangle approached and began speaking.

Without warning, the assailant lashed out at the cop and ran off as another cop chased after him, the video shows.

The cops were assigned to "a fixed post to address community concerns" when the attack took place around 4:45 a.m. near East 51st Street and Church Avenue in Flatbush, the NYPD said.

A suspect — identified by law-enforcement sources as Tyshaun Holloway, 27, of Hackensack, N.J. — was caught about a block away, where he allegedly began "flailing and swinging" to avoid arrest, an NYPD spokesman said.

Holloway stands just 5-foot-5 and weighs 160 pounds, according to jail records.

A criminal complaint alleges that he was found hiding under a parked car by the injured cop and his partner.

When they pulled him out, Holloway allegedly screamed, "Get off me, you f—king bitch, I'm

going to kill you all as soon as I can," according to the complaint.

Holloway was charged with assaulting a police officer, menacing, resisting arrest, obstruction of governmental administration, assault and criminal possession of a weapon.

Holloway has prior arrests that include a pair of September 2016 assaults on NYPD cops in The Bronx.

Those attacks stemmed from a groping incident in The Bronx, after which he hit an officer in the face while being placed under arrest, according to the Bronx District Attorney's Office.

Holloway was then taken to the psychiatric ward at Lincoln Hospital, where he threw a piece of a heart monitor at a different cop who was guarding him and also tried to punch the cop, the DA's Office said.

Holloway later struck a plea bargain to misdemeanor assault and forcible touching, for which he was sentenced to 30 days in jail. He was later charged with two attempted robberies and accused of making terroristic threats in separate incidents in Harlem in 2017, sources said.

Details of those incidents weren't immediately available, but online records show he was convicted in Manhattan of second-degree assault and sentenced to two years in prison. He was paroled in 2019 and completed his post-release supervision in February.

Holloway, who is originally from Virginia, was arraigned Sunday in Brooklyn Criminal Court before Judge Kim Petersen, who ordered him held on \$30,000 cash or bond pending another court appearance Friday, court and jail records show.

His Legal Aid lawyer's voicemail box was full and she couldn't immediat

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## R.O.M.E.O.(RETIRED OLD MEN EATING OUT)

We have secured Hurricane Grilled Wings and Things for a ROMEO Lunch on August 16th at 12 Noon. This is the same place we had our June meeting, which was attended by over 90 members. This is not an official meeting it is just a lunch for all to stay in touch over the summer siesta. For this lunch attendees will be asked to pick up their own tab for the lunch. The menu will be the regular menu plus the Bar-Bites they offer. There will be no official business discussed but any questions that you have we can hopefully answer. We will need a count of who will attend so the proprietor will have sufficient personnel to work the lunch. So if you will attend please RSVP by email to: [fl\\_fop\\_ny3100@hotmail.com](mailto:fl_fop_ny3100@hotmail.com) as soon as possible. If this is successful it is something we will look to have more of in the future, with additional locations. We are Looking forward to seeing many of you there.

## Holiday Party

The date of our Holiday Party at Benvenuto's is Wednesday, December 8th, 2021. The cost is \$65.00 Per Person for members and their guests. For friends of members the cost is \$75.00 Per Person. Please save the date, so you can join us for this celebration.  
Executive Board  
FOP Lodge NY 3100

## 4 Warning Signs of Melanoma That Are Easy to Miss

I Nearly 100,000 Americans are [diagnosed with melanoma](#) each year, making it one of the most common types of cancer in the U.S., especially among older adults who have endured decades of sun exposure and whose immune systems aren't as robust as they once were. And while melanoma can be deadly, it is highly curable if caught early.

Do you know what to look for? The [hallmarks of melanoma](#) are asymmetrical or rough-looking moles that are not defined by a border. A spot on the skin that continues to grow in size or change is another indication, and a once-monthly body scan is an easy way to keep tabs on any of these concerning characteristics. But there are also some more unusual signs that could signal the presence of the skin cancer.

"Melanoma is such a rule breaker," says Elizabeth Buchbinder, M.D., an oncologist at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston and an assistant professor at Harvard Medical School. Little moles can cause big trouble, and new spots can grow and spread quickly, she adds. "And so knowing what to look out for, it's super important."

Here are four warning signs of melanoma you need to know about so that no spot goes unnoticed.

### **1. The 'ugly duckling'**

People who have [lots of moles](#) are at increased risk for melanoma. That said, there's no need to start counting your spots or panicking over every mark on your body. Instead, pay attention to the moles that stand out — those that are darker than the rest, have changed recently or are more oddly shaped. Buchbinder calls these "ugly ducklings."

"If you have a bunch of dark moles, but you have 50 of them, they're not all melanomas," she says. "But if you have one mole that really

looks different than the others, and it's kind of that ugly duckling, that's the one that you really want to get looked at and checked."

With women, melanomas most commonly appear on the arms and legs. Men need to pay special attention to their head, neck, back and trunk. Still, those aren't the only places this type of skin cancer can pop up.

### **2. 'Where the sun doesn't shine'**

The majority of melanomas are thought to be caused by ultraviolet (UV) light, but not all of them come from sun exposure. Melanoma can develop anywhere on the body, including "in places the sun doesn't shine," like the soles of the feet or the palms of the hand, says Elizabeth Quigley, M.D., a dermatologist and associate physician at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York.

The cancer can also appear as a dark streak under a fingernail or toenail, which is what happened to musician Bob Marley, who initially mistook his melanoma for a bruise on the toe and eventually died from it. (A clue that you should see a doctor: a dark spot under the nail bed that doesn't grow out with the nail over time, like a blood blister would, Buchbinder says.)

And while it's rarer, melanoma can also develop on the eye, inside the mouth or on the scalp. Buchbinder has even seen patients experience changes in their hair color — "someone who had gray hair and developed a black streak" — because of a melanoma growing on the scalp. "So strange things can happen, but these aren't common ones," she adds.

That said, these "hidden" melanomas *are* more common in people with darker skin, points out Vishal Patel, M.D., assistant professor of dermatology at the George Washington School of Medicine & Health Sciences and director of the Cutaneous Oncology Program at the GW Cancer Center. And because they're easier to miss, they're usually more dangerous by the time they're diagnosed.

So I tell Black and Indian and Asian patients that if you have nail changes, [any dark spots] on your palms and soles, as well as in the eye and mouth, these are ones that I worry about,” Patel adds. “Because while it is less common to have that, when it does happen, it is worse. So it's important to know about that.”

### **3. Red, white and blue hues**

While melanomas are often depicted as dark-brown moles, they can actually present in a variety of colors. The cancer may have a blue tint to it, from deeper pigmentation, says Robert Brodell, M.D., a professor and chair of the Department of Dermatology at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Or it can appear red, the result of an [immune response](#). “The body is attacking it. It knows it's abnormal and it's trying to defend itself, and you get inflammation,” Brodell explains.

It's also possible for a melanoma to “look like a rash,” says Quigley, and take on a pink hue. But when the spot doesn't get better with creams and other treatments that normally nix a rash, “you need to check and make sure that that's not a skin cancer,” she says.

Another sign of a melanoma can be lack of color. Some of these cancerous spots lose their pigmentation completely or partially, leaving a halo of white around a darker spot.

“And that's something that gives us a little concern,” Buchbinder says. “Was the body recognizing something like a melanoma that was going wrong, and in its process of destroying the melanoma it destroyed some of the normal melanocytes [cells in the skin that produce pigment] in that area? It's just one of those things that may kind of make you look a little closer at something.”

### **4. Spots on the skin that bleed or itch**

If a mole on your body starts to itch or becomes more painful or tender, you need to get it checked out. The same goes if the surface of a mole changes. Maybe it starts to ooze or bleed or take on a scaly appearance and doesn't heal on its own.

“We think that some of that irritation — the itching, the bleeding — is actually the body starting to recognize [the cancer] and starting to attack it a little, making it irritated. And so that's why you'll see some itching and bleeding and irritation near the actual mole,” Buchbinder says.

### **Skin cancer prevention**

Wearing sun-protective clothing and UV-blocking sunglasses, and lathering up on sunscreen are some of the most effective ways to prevent melanoma. Another thing to keep in mind: People on certain blood pressure medications, including diuretics such as hydrochlorothiazide and calcium channel blockers such as nifedipine, for example, need to be extra cautious when spending time outside. “Many of those [blood pressure] medicines make us more sensitive to the sun and more likely to get a sunburn,” Quigley says, amplifying the risk of skin cancer.

Because not all skin cancers are caused by sun exposure, [frequent skin checks](#) are an important part of prevention, too. Catching a melanoma before it has time to grow in thickness and spread to other areas of the body greatly improves your chances of survival. (You can find tips on how to do a self-exam on the [American Cancer Society's website](#).) Keeping your immune system as strong as possible can also help prevent melanoma.

The bottom line: “People need to really be aware of their skin,” Quigley says. “And if there's anything that seems abnormal, it's not the time to wait — it needs to be evaluated. ... Particularly with [COVID](#), patients have been [delaying their skin checkups](#) and their skin evaluations, and we are seeing that that is detrimental.”

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# A moving story about our American military heroes.

Thank You Alan Berkowitz for bringing this to our attention.

Each year I am hired to go to Washington, DC, with the eighth grade class from Clinton, WI where I grew up, to videotape their trip. I greatly enjoy visiting our nation's capital and each year I take some special memories back with me. This fall's trip was especially memorable.

On the last night of our trip, we stopped at the Iwo Jima memorial. This memorial is the largest bronze statue in the world and depicts one of the most famous photographs in history -- that of the six brave soldiers raising the American Flag at the top of a rocky hill on the island of Iwo Jima, Japan, during WW II.

Over one hundred students and chaperones piled off the buses and headed towards the memorial. I noticed a solitary figure at the base of the statue, and as I got closer he asked, 'Where are you guys from?'

I told him that we were from Wisconsin. 'Hey, I'm a cheese head, too! Come gather around, Cheese heads, and I will tell you a story.'

(It was James Bradley who just happened to be in Washington, DC, to speak at the memorial the following day. He was there that night to say good night to his dad, who had passed away. He was just about to leave when he saw the buses pull up. I videotaped him as he spoke to us, and received his permission to share what he said from my videotape. It is one thing to tour the incredible monuments filled with history in Washington, DC, but it is quite another to get the kind of insight we received that night.)

When all had gathered around, he reverently began to speak.  
(Here are his words that night.)

'My name is James Bradley and I'm from Antigo, Wisconsin. My dad is on that statue, and I wrote a book called 'Flags of Our Fathers'. It is the story of the six boys you see behind me.

'Six boys raised the flag.

The first guy putting the pole in the ground is Harlon Block. Harlon was an all-state football player. He enlisted in the Marine Corps with all the senior members of his football team. They were off to play another type of game. A game called 'War.' But it didn't turn out to be a game. Harlon, at the age of 21, died with his intestines in his hands. I don't say that to gross you out, I say that because there are people who stand in front of this statue and talk about the glory of war. You guys need to know that most of the boys in Iwo Jima were 17, 18, and 19 years old - and it was so hard that the ones who did make it home never even would talk to their families about it.

(He pointed to the statue) 'You see this next guy? That's Rene Gagnon from New Hampshire. If you took Rene's helmet off at the moment this photo was taken and looked in the webbing of that helmet, you would find a photograph... a photograph of his girlfriend Rene put that in there for protection because he was scared. He was 18 years old. It was just boys who won the battle of Iwo Jima. Boys. Not old men.

'The next guy here, the third guy in this tableau, was Sergeant Mike Strank. Mike is my hero. He was the hero of all these guys. They called him the 'old man' because he was so old. He was already 24. When Mike would motivate his boys in training camp, he didn't say, 'Let's go kill some Japanese' or 'Let's die for our country' He knew he was talking to little boys. Instead, he would say, 'You do what I say, and I'll get you home to your mothers.'

Continued on Next Page

August, 2021

Continued from Previous Page

'The last guy on this side of the statue is Ira Hayes, a Pima Indian from Arizona. Ira Hayes was one of them who lived to walk off Iwo Jima.

He went into the White House with my dad. President Truman told him, 'You're a hero' He told reporters, 'How can I feel like a hero when 250 of my buddies hit the island with me and only 27 of us walked off alive?'

So you take your class at school, 250 of you spending a year together having fun, doing everything together. Then all 250 of you hit the beach, but only 27 of your classmates walk off alive. That was Ira Hayes. He had images of horror in his mind. Ira Hayes carried the pain home with him and eventually died dead drunk, face down, drowned in a very shallow puddle, at the age of 32 (ten years after this picture was taken).

'The next guy, going around the statue, is Franklin Sousley from Hilltop, Kentucky. A fun-lovin' hillbilly boy. His best friend, who is now 70, told me, 'Yeah, you know, we took two cows up on the porch of the Hilltop General Store. Then we strung wire across the stairs so the cows couldn't get down. Then we fed them Epsom salts. Those cows crapped all night.' Yes, he was a fun-lovin' hillbilly boy. Franklin died on Iwo Jima at the age of 19. When the telegram came to tell his mother that he was dead, it went to the Hilltop General Store. A barefoot boy ran that telegram up to his mother's farm. The neighbors could hear her scream all night and into the morning. Those neighbors lived a quarter of a mile away.

'The next guy, as we continue to go around the statue, is my dad, John Bradley, from Antigo, Wisconsin, where I was raised. My dad lived until 1994, but he would never give interviews. When Walter Cronkite's producers or the New York Times would call, we were trained as little kids to say 'No, I'm sorry, sir, my dad's not here. He is in Canada fishing. No, there is no phone there, sir. No, we don't know when he is coming back.' My dad never fished or even went to Canada. Usually, he was sitting there right at the table eating his Campbell's soup. But we had to tell the press that he was out fishing He didn't want to talk to the press.

'You see, like Ira Hayes, my dad didn't see himself as a hero. Everyone thinks these guys are heroes, 'cause they are in a photo and on a monument. My dad knew better. He was a medic. John Bradley from Wisconsin was a combat caregiver. On Iwo Jima, he probably held over 200 boys as they died. And when boys died on Iwo Jima, they writhed and screamed, without any medication or help with the pain.

'When I was a little boy, my third-grade teacher told me that my dad was a hero. When I went home and told my dad that, he looked at me and said, 'I want you always to remember that the heroes of Iwo Jima are the guys who did not come back. Did NOT come back!'

'So that's the story about six nice young boys. Three died on Iwo Jima, and three came back as national heroes. Overall, 7,000 boys died on Iwo Jima in the worst battle in the history of the Marine Corps.

My voice is giving out, so I will end here. Thank you for your time.'

Suddenly, the monument wasn't just a big old piece of metal with a flag sticking out of the top. It came to life before our eyes with the heartfelt words of a son who did indeed have a father who was a hero. Maybe not a hero for the reasons most people would believe, but a hero nonetheless.

One thing I learned while on tour with my 8th grade students in DC that is not mentioned here is ... that if you look at the statue very closely and count the number of 'hands' raising the flag, there are 13. When the man who made the statue was asked why there were 13, he simply said the 13th hand was the hand of God.

Great story - worth your time - worth every American's time.  
Please pass it on.

August, 2021

# NYPD Officer Saves Stabbing Victim Using Potato Chip Bag and Tape

July 19, 2021 • by [POL Staff](#) •

**NYPD Officer Ronald Kennedy used an empty potato chip bag and tape to help a stabbing victim suffering from a sucking chest wound. (Photo: NYPD/Twitter)**

A New York police officer used an empty potato chip bag and tape to slow the bleeding of a stabbing victim July 7, police said Sunday. Body camera video released by the New York Police Department showed Officer Ronald Kennedy placing the bag over the man's wound described by emergency personnel as a "sucking chest wound."

The officer used the makeshift chest seal after he responded to a report of a stabbing in Harlem, the police public information office told [NBC News](#).

Paramedics arrived, applied a chest seal and transported the victim. The victim was taken to the hospital in critical condition, police said. Police said in a statement in the edited bodycam video that the attending physician attributed the man's survival to Kennedy's actions.

August, 2021

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## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - 2021

If you would like to join NY Lodge 3100, please complete this form and mail it to the Lodge with the appropriate dues and a copy of your retired law enforcement officer ID from any NY Law Enforcement Agency. The annual dues for retired NY Law Enforcement personnel are \$50.00; new members must pay an initiation of fee \$10 making the new members cost \$60.00 total. Please make your check payable to the FOP LODGE NY 3100 and mail it to the address listed above. Retired NY law enforcement personnel who reside anywhere in the State of Florida are eligible to become members. Please remember \$5 of either payment \$50 or \$60 goes directly into our Funeral Fund and is not added to the general fund of the Lodge NY 3100

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August, 2021

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August, 2021



## **Tax Brackets for income earned in 2021**

- 37% for incomes over \$523,600 (\$628,300 for married couples filing jointly)
- 35% for incomes over \$209,425 (\$418,850 for married couples filing jointly)
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- 12% for incomes over \$9,950 (\$19,900 for married couples filing jointly)
- 10% for incomes up to \$9,950 (\$19,900 for married couples filing jointly)

[Married filing separately pay at same rate as unmarried. Source: Internal Revenue Service »](#)

August, 2021

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August, 2021

## Police retirements surged after George Floyd killing, data finds

Cops across the country have been calling it a career since **the murder of George Floyd** in 2020 — which sparked national scrutiny on policing, new research shows.

Several agencies in the nation are seeing an almost 45-percent surge in retirements and departures compared to the year before Floyd's death in Minneapolis at the hands of convicted cop Derek Chauvin, according to data from the Police Executive Research Forum obtained by the Associated Press.

“It's a wake-up call,” Chuck Wexler, head of the Washington-based group, told the outlet. There is a “crisis on the horizon” for departments that need resources, as shrinking staffs and increases in crime create a “combustible mixture,” he added. Hiring has slowed by 5 percent, the Forum also found.

The group's research focused on a small sample size of US law enforcement agencies – 194 out of roughly 18,000. It used data from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021 and compared those numbers to the same period from a year earlier.

Floyd's murder on May 25, 2020 led to protests across the country and mounting calls **to defund police or reduce budgets for local departments**. Anti-police sentiment has risen as elected officials push for more police accountability – and local departments see sagging morale.

The new climate in the country has led depars **retired** or said they would retire, a 75 percent increase from the year before, according to the data.

By comparison in 2019, 1,509 left NYPD and another 1,544 filed for retirement, the data showed. Another 831 offictment heads to change the way they go about recruiting.

Atlanta Police Chief Rodney Bryant told the AP the department used to seek candidates who had “the strength to be more physical.”

“Today's police officers, that's not what we're looking for,” he said. “We're looking for someone who can actually relate to the community but also think like the community thinks.”

The forthcoming report is the latest that shows ongoing difficulties in recruitment and retention of officers during the current national divisiveness over policing.

In New York City, there were 272 uniformed officers who **put in retirement papers** in the month after Floyd's murder, previous NYPD data showed.

For all of 2020, **5,300 uniformed NYPD offices** retired or filed to leave by April 21.

exodus comes as police look to recruit a more diverse group of candidates that better reflect the ethnic and racial characteristics of the communities they cover.

A recent report showed out of 4,700 troopers in the New York State Police, only 4 percent were black and 6 percent Hispanic – compared to statewide data showing New York is 16 percent black and 19 percent Hispanic.

## **Masks**

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If you are fully vaccinated, you can resume activities that you did before the pandemic without wearing a mask or physically distancing, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations. That includes local business and workplace guidance. You will still be required to wear a mask on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States, and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations.

You should still watch out for symptoms of COVID-19, especially if you've been around someone who is sick. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you should get tested and stay home and away from others.

### Guidance for Unvaccinated People

If you haven't been vaccinated yet, wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth to help protect yourself and others. Masks should be worn in addition to staying at least 6 feet apart, especially around people who don't live with you. Get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you can. Being in crowds makes you more likely to get or spread COVID-19, so avoid crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces. And wash your hands often with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.

August, 2021

# AOC (POS) brushes off concerns over surging NYC crime as ‘hysteria’

By Carl Campanile and Bruce

Golding

June 29, 2021 | 1:13pm | Updated

It's not like any of the shootings that have New Yorkers panicked are taking place in AOC's backyard — oh wait, they are.

US Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) sparked outrage Tuesday for dismissing concerns about surging crime as “hysteria.”

The Bronx-Queens congresswoman, a far-left progressive routinely referred to by her initials, AOC, made the remark during a Zoom chat with freshman US Rep. Jamaal Bowman (D-NY), a fellow proponent of the “Defund the police” movement who represents the Bronx and Westchester.

“We are seeing these headlines about percentage increases,” Ocasio-Cortez said, reducing recent incidents such as a tourist shot in broad daylight in Times Square and kids ducking for cover amid a gang shooting in the Bronx to mere statistics.

“Now I want to say that any amount of harm is unacceptable and too much. But I also want to make sure that this hysteria, you know, that this doesn't drive a hysteria and that we look at these numbers in context so that we can make responsible decisions about what to allocate in that context.”

Bronx City Councilman Ruben Diaz Sr. on Tuesday blasted Ocasio-Cortez's remarks and said she “is wrong.”

“The crime increase is a crisis,” said Diaz, a fellow Democrat.

“She should talk to the senior citizens in the Bronx who are afraid to come out of their house. She should talk to the mothers whose kids were killed by gun violence.”

Ocasio-Cortez's remarks also contradicted the results of a recent poll commissioned by The Post that found opposition to defunding the police was strongest in the crime-ridden Bronx, where more than 60 percent of respondents disapproved of last year's slashing of \$1 billion from the NYPD budget. The National Fraternal Order of Police also said Ocasio-Cortez “said the quiet part out loud: the Narrative Matters More to her than Peoples' Lives.” “Dismissing the #CrimeCrisis across the country, saying it's just ‘hysteria,’ is textbook #Gaslighting,” the group tweeted.

“@AOC, those ‘percentage increases’ are Mothers, Fathers, Sons & Daughters.”

Figures posted by the FOP show massive increases in homicide rates in various cities this year compared to the same period two years ago, including 50 percent in New York City, 66 percent in Philadelphia, 44 percent in Atlanta and 33 percent in Chicago.

Meanwhile, Portland, Ore. — which was wracked by riots following last year's police murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis — has seen homicides skyrocket 138 percent since 2019 and 533 percent since last year, according to the FOP. Ocasio-Cortez's comments were posted online Sunday, the same day a newlywed US Marine was wounded by a stray bullet in Times Square, marking the second such incident in the past two months.

US Rep. Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY), who represents Staten Island and Brooklyn, blasted Ocasio-Cortez as a “hypocrite.”

“Easy for AOC to say...she walks around with a security detail while trying to deny her constituents police protection on our streets and our subways,” Malliotakis tweeted.

Other critics included Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Glenn Greenwald, who noted that Ocasio-Cortez — a proponent of the “Defund the police” movement — “just acted to ensure \$2 billion more in spending” on the Capitol Police by voting “present” instead of “no” on a bill that passed the House 213-212 vote last month.

“AOC is mocking ordinary people as ‘hysterical’ who are afraid of violent crime in their neighborhood: people who, unlike her, don't have reams of private security,” Greenwald tweeted.

## WELCOME TO FEAR CITY



August, 2021



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August, 2021

# Austin-Area DA Apologizes to Officer, Drops Charges of Excessive Force

July 20, 2021 • by [POL Staff](#) •

Charges have been dropped against an Austin Police officer after a review of a March 2019 use-of-force incident found his actions were justified.

On Tuesday, Travis County District Attorney José Garza announced the pending indictment against APD Officer Gregory Gentry was dismissed “in the best interest of justice,” [KXAN](#) reports.

The release from Garza claims, during the previous administration, an Assistant District Attorney obtained an expert opinion that had evidence helpful to the defense. Garza says when the case was presented to a grand jury in January, that exculpatory evidence wasn’t discussed with the prosecution or disclosed to the defense. A letter from Garza stated an expert concluded that Officer Gentry’s use of force was lawful.

“Upon review, we have decided that a dismissal of the indictment is the appropriate action to take in this case and best serves the interest of justice,” said District Attorney José Garza. “I offer my sincere apologies to Officer Gentry who undoubtedly suffered as a result of this process.”

Gentry was facing felony assault charges related to an incident in 2019 when he and fellow officer Chance Bretches attempted to stop what they believed was a narcotics deal.

According to APD, a fight ensued when Gentry and Bretches tried arresting one of the suspects — the suspect and officers were hurt during the scuffle in March 2019.

August, 2021

## Two Good Samaritans Stop Suspect Who Was Beating Virginia Officer

[Sandy Malone](#) 22 hours ago

Fredericksburg, VA - Fredericksburg police officials are crediting the quick actions of two good Samaritans who intervened to help an officer who was being attacked by a suspect on Wednesday.

Fredericksburg Police Spokeswoman Sarah Morris said the incident began at about 6:30 a.m. on July 21 when an officer responded to the Walmart Parking lot in Central Park for a report of a suspicious person going through vehicles, [The Free Lance-Star](#) reported.

Morris said that the officer identified the suspect when he arrived on the scene in the 800-block of Carl D. Silver Parkway and found several stolen items in his possession.

She said the officer went to detain the man, but the suspect tried to walk away, [The Free Lance-Star](#) reported.

Then the suspect turned around and hit the officer, the police spokeswoman said.

Morris said the suspect knocked the officer to the ground and punched him multiple times in the head, [The Free Lance-Star](#) reported.

That was when the two bystanders who saw what happened and moved to intervene and help the police officer.

The Fredericksburg Police Department said in a [Facebook](#) post that the good Samaritans pulled the suspect off the officer and then the man was taken into custody.

The officer's attacker was identified as 31-year-old Joshua Duggins, [The Free Lance-Star](#) reported.

Police said the wounded officer was transported to a nearby hospital and treated for head injuries.

The officer, a two-year veteran of the police force, was released from the hospital on Thursday.

Duggins was charged with assault on law enforcement and malicious wounding, [The Free Lance-Star](#) reported.

He was booked into the Rappahannock Regional Jail where he was held without bond, according to the police department's Facebook post.

Duggins was arraigned in Fredericksburg General District Court on July 22, [The Free Lance-Star](#) reported.

He has a preliminary hearing scheduled for Aug. 17.

Police officials heaped praise on the good Samaritans who stepped up to help the officer who was being attacked.

"If the two individuals watching nearby had not selflessly taken it upon themselves to assist the officer during the attack, the injuries he sustained could have been much more severe," Fredericksburg Police Chief Brian Layton said in the Facebook post.

"I can't thank them enough for bravely putting themselves in danger," Chief Layton continued. "The courage seen by the officer and individuals show we are stronger when we work together."

Fredericksburg police said this was the third "considerable assault" on an officer on their police force in the past 12 weeks.

A Fredericksburg officer was punched in the face on April 24 as he tried to escort someone to the hospital, according to the police department's Facebook post.

Another officer had his nose broken on June 11 after he served a trespassing notice.

August, 2021

**California is experiencing a wave of crime despite Gov. Gavin Newsom's claims of a decrease during the past three decades, officials say.**

"You've got violent crime off the charts," Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert told The Epoch Times. "You've got this tsunami of things that are happening. Violent crime, illegal guns, [and] rampant theft."

On July 21 in Los Angeles, when asked if state policies are making crime worse, Newsom denied the state is seeing a rise in crime.

"The evidence doesn't back it up. Last three decades we've actually seen a significant decline in crime in the state," Newsom said.

According to a Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) released in 2021, four major cities have witnessed an increase in homicide and car thefts. Los Angeles, Oakland, San Diego, and San Francisco are experiencing such heightened crime despite dropping in violent crime in March 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Data provided by PPIC shows that in 2020, Los Angeles reported a 40 percent homicide increase in comparison to 2019; Oakland reported a 36 percent increase. San Francisco and San Diego both witnessed increases from 41 to 48 percent and 50 percent to 55 percent, respectively.

In January and February 2021, violent crime was 12 percent lower in comparison to the first few months of 2020. PPIC attributed the decrease to fewer robberies and aggravated assaults. Out of the four cities, Oakland was the only one that witnessed an increase in aggravated assaults of about 10 percent.

**Weakening Penalties**

Schubert said lenience toward those that have committed horrid offenses is making the state a more dangerous place.

"You've got the Los Angeles DA who's essentially doing everything you can do to dismantle the justice system," Schubert said. "You've got a legislature who's consistently voted for bills that weaken accountability. You've got ballot initiatives that have misled the public, to the point that we've basically decriminalized left."

Pending bill AB 333 would remove burglary, identity fraud violations, looting, and felony vandalism from gang-related crimes.

Rescue California campaign manager Anne Dunsmore told The Epoch Times state policies enforced by Newsom, such as Prop 47, could attribute to heightened crime in the state. Through Prop 47, certain theft and drug possession offenses are marketed as misdemeanors rather than felonies. When passed, previous offenders that were serving sentences for felony offenses became eligible for resentencing.

"He's trying to show that he's cutting down on prison population and that somehow indicates that crime is on the decline," Dunsmore said.

While Newsom said that there are fewer felons, Dunsmore attributed the drop to the state reducing many felonies to misdemeanors.

Additionally, between 2021 to 2022, California is to close two state prisons as a part of the governor's 2020-21 state budget plan to implement reforms and changes that will significantly reduce prison populations.

**Releasing Prisoners**

In May, efforts to decrease prison populations escalated after the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) announced under Prop 57 that it would increase good conduct credit toward eligible inmates, allowing them to potentially be released early.

Of those eligible to receive good credits, 63,000 are incarcerated for violent crimes, and 20,000 inmates are sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

"You let a lot of felons out of prison, they're on the streets, there's a reason that crime is on the rise," Dunsmore said. "They're letting all these people out without any structure in place to monitor them, or even rehabilitate them."

"For these people [to] sit there and know that their children's killers could get out, like the guy who killed Michael Lyons" and committed aggravated sexual assault, Dunsmore said. "That guy is a model prisoner; he actually qualifies for early release."

In 1996, Robert Boyd Rhoades was charged with first-degree murder in Sutter County after torturing and killing 8-year-old Michael. Rhoades was no stranger to the criminal justice system as he committed multiple crimes prior to 1996.

Rhoades is set to receive the death penalty, but California's changing law might say otherwise.

While some lawmakers are for reducing prison times, others advocate for victims' rights.

"Michael's killer is on death row because he's a horrific, not just serial killer [but] his history was atrocious," Schubert said. "Now we have a legislature that even though the jury has recommended a certain sentence wants to pass a bill that he can petition to get out."

She continued, "It's despicable when a cop talks about a crime victim and putting them through the wringer. Time and time again when they've been given assurance that this horrific serial rapist-murderer has been sentenced to never get out of prison."

Amid the crime crisis, Schubert and Dunsmore said they are advocating for more structure within the state to enforce and carry out laws.

"[Newsom] can't fix a problem if he denies the fact that it's there, and that's what he's doing," Dunsmore said. "That's dangerous."

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August, 2021

## **NYC to require vaccines or weekly testing for city workers**

The rule is expected to affect about 340,000 city employees, making the city one of the largest employers in the U.S. to take such action. While it isn't a vaccine mandate — no workers will be forced to take a shot — officials hope the inconvenience and discomfort of weekly tests will persuade many to overcome a reluctance to get inoculated.

“This is about our recovery. This is about what we need to do to bring back New York City,” de Blasio said. “This is about keeping people safe.”

Hours after de Blasio's announcement, officials in California announced that state employees and all health care workers will be required to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination or get tested weekly.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo declined to answer a question about whether he will require state employees to be vaccinated. Speaking at a news conference at Yankee Stadium, Cuomo urged localities to consider vaccinating public-facing government workers.

The Sept. 13 deadline in New York City coincides with the start of public school, when the Democratic mayor has said he expects all pupils to be in classrooms full time. City health care workers and employees in congregate settings such as group homes will face earlier deadlines.

The move comes as the city battles a rise in COVID-19 cases fueled by the highly contagious delta variant. Since the end of June, the daily average of new cases has increased by more than 300%.

Last week, the city had announced it was mandating vaccinations or weekly testing for workers in the city's hospital system.

De Blasio expanded the requirement Monday and urged private employers to adopt similar rules.

“My message to the private sector is: Go as far as you can go right now,” the mayor said. “I would strongly urge a vaccination mandate whenever possible, or as close to it as possible.”

Unions representing city workers offered mixed responses to the new mandate affecting their members.

“Vaccination and testing have helped keep schools among the safest places in the city,” the United Federation of Teachers said in a statement. “This approach puts the emphasis on vaccination but still allows for personal choice and provides additional safeguards through regular testing.”

But Henry Garrido, executive director of District Council 37 of AFSCME, said, “If City Hall intends to test our members weekly, they must first meet us at the table to bargain.”

Garrido, whose union represents about 100,000 New York City employees across several departments, said weekly testing is subject to mandatory bargaining.

“New York City is a union town and that cannot be ignored,” he said in a statement.

Asked about Garrido's statement, de Blasio said the city has a right to require that its workforce gets vaccinated or tested.

“When it comes to the health and safety of our workers in the midst of a global pandemic, we have the right, as employers, to take urgent action to protect people's health, to protect their lives,” he said.

The number of vaccine doses being given out daily in the city has dropped to less than 18,000, down from a peak of more than 100,000 in early April. About 65% of adults in the city are fully vaccinated.

Meanwhile, caseloads have been rising for weeks, and health officials say the variant makes up about seven in 10 new cases.

De Blasio has said that he does not plan to reimpose a broad indoor mask mandate, [as Los Angeles County has done](#). Masks are required in some settings such as public transportation.

De Blasio said unvaccinated city employees will be required to wear masks indoors at all times.

Asked how the city would handle unvaccinated employees who don't want to wear masks in the workplace, city labor relations commissioner Renee Campion said, “If employees refuse to comply, they just can't be at work. And in fact, they will not be paid.”

August, 2021

## Editors Note

Please accept my apology for including in this newsletter pertinent and timely information regarding the upcoming changes to the New York City health coverage for the Medicare Eligible Retirees. If any of our members from any other New York State agency have any important information they would like me to include in the future newsletter, I would be happy to do so.

Sincerely Yours  
Harvey Feit

## Scams

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### **Your Utility Bill Is Past Due: Pay Now or Get Cut Off**

Heat waves make having reliable air conditioning and fans, and the electricity that powers them, essential. Scammers will impersonate utility providers by phone (though sometimes other ways – email, text, in person) and claim your account is past due and you must pay immediately, or your power will be shut off. TIP: If you get a call or message like this, disengage. You can call your utility provider using the phone number on your statement if you're concerned there may be an issue.

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### **Renting a Car for an Unbelievable Deal? Don't Believe It**

The pandemic led rental car companies to sell off lots of inventory, resulting in fewer cars and higher prices now that people are looking to travel. Scammers are spoofing well-known rental car websites and advertising fake customer service numbers. Their goal is to lure in travelers with great deals – and convince them the best way to pay is with a gift card. TIP: Seek out the real website or phone number for rental car companies (type in the web address versus doing a web search, which can turn up fake information). If you're dealing with a company you've never heard of, search the name online, along with the word "scam" to see what comes up. Oh, and a legitimate business will never seek payment for goods or services with a gift card.

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### **The Dream Vacation Home That Turns Into a Nightmare**

Lots of travelers are seeking home rentals over hotel reservations for their getaways. Unfortunately, scammers are the ones getting away – with fake offers and large deposits. They steal rental listings straight from legitimate sites and post them online in the hopes of convincing travelers to rent through them instead of the real property owners. TIP: Be wary of renting off of social media sites or through companies you haven't booked through before. Keep all of your interactions with property owners on the website of legitimate companies. A request to take your conversation off the site is a sign of a likely scam.