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The Budget That Was, Is and Wasn't

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1. The Extender That Was

Our Spin:

After a six-year stint of passing a state budget close enough to the March 31st deadline for lawmakers and the Governor to consider it on time, Albany has reverted back to its old practice of gridlock as they failed to agree on several issues. Following what Governor Cuomo referred to as a “grace period” (aka the weekend) the Governor introduced emergency extender legislation on Monday to keep New York State Government open for business and paychecks flowing to state employees. While New York’s upper chamber fled Albany Wednesday bound for their home district, second home or in the case of one member, Israel, Assembly members are still here; hope springs eternal.

The Story:

On Monday, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced the passage of a 2018 state budget extender while his administration and the Legislature continue to work toward a final budget agreement. The extender funds all government operations through May 31 and advances key priority infrastructure, economic development, and environmental projects across New York. The budget extender also secures \$2.5 billion to ensure access to clean, drinkable water for all New Yorkers, protects the state’s most vulnerable from cost of prescription drugs, and increases direct care professional salaries 6.5 percent over the next two years. “The Legislature has not been able to reach total

agreement on all issues necessary for a complete annual agenda,” the governor said in a statement. “Raise the Age and affordable housing are especially controversial politically, but necessary governmentally. I will not accept ‘half a loaf’ on these issues.” On the other hand, it was the Legislature pointing the finger back at Cuomo, stating he was the one to blame for the parties not having reached an agreement. Some Republicans saw the governor’s failure to get an agreement as telling of his desire to run for President. “I don’t think he lost his touch; I think he lost his focus,” said Senator John A. DeFrancisco, the Deputy Majority Leader who represents the Syracuse area. “The focus is no longer on getting a budget. The focus is on his political future.”

[Democrat & Chronicle](#)
[New York Times](#)

2. The Budget That Is

Our Spin:

In an unprecedented move, the Senate and the Assembly passed six of the necessary nine budget bills without a final agreement. After repeated rumors of a “conceptual agreement,” there was only disagreement. Is half a loaf better than none? Not for the members of the Senate and the Assembly who are not getting paid.

The Story:

The state Senate began voting on budget bills Tuesday night, with the passing of four Article VII bills,

transportation, education, public protection and health and mental hygiene. All bills passed by broad bipartisan majorities, with the only hiccup being the introduction of amendments by the mainline Democratic conference that would add in elements such as closure of the LLC loophole and other longed-for Democratic items. Both amendments were struck down, with members of the Independent Democratic Conference joining with their Republican coalition partners to rule the amendments out of order. The Assembly on the other hand, had already called a quits for the night, planning to take up the bills on Wednesday. Wednesday however, did not go as planned. As negotiations continued throughout the day, talks collapsed Wednesday night, leaving members of the Senate so frustrated that they left the Capitol for their eighteen day Easter break. Again, lawmakers from both parties blamed Gov. Andrew Cuomo for scuttling negotiations over the spending plan. "You're at the point where you might not get everything that you want," said Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, who called on Cuomo to send the Legislature actual budget bills to vote on, as soon as possible. "I'm not going to allow the Assembly to get blamed for there not being a budget." On Thursday the Assembly began taking up the bills already passed by the Senate. "We're here, ready to work and we want to shut this down," Heastie said.

[State of Politics](#)
[Capitol Confidential](#)

3. The Budget That Wasn't

Our Spin:

Now you see it, now you don't! A solid week of gubernatorial sleight of hand, left New Yorkers with no budget and no one to blame.



The Story:

On Thursday with the Senate already out of town, Governor Cuomo offered a possible proposal to the Legislature to try and break the deadlock over the state's overdue budget. Perhaps aware of the damage being done to his reputation as an efficient leader, Mr. Cuomo called a meeting at his office to hash out the details on three issues that he identified as sticking points, Raise The Age (RTA), the 421-a tax abatement program, and charter school funding. The issue surrounding RTA is whether corrections officers or the staff of the Office of Children and Family Services would monitor youthful offenders who had served sentences under the plan. A Cuomo administration source said the compromise laid out on the table Thursday would have a panel of law enforcement officials and social workers to determine post-supervision release. The 421-a issue involves efforts to renew the 421-a subsidy while linking that renewal to rent control, which lapses in two years, but in the new proposal that linkage is off the table. Allegedly the last holdup in the negotiations centers on charter school funding, and the imminent expiration of a law that froze tuition increases for charters. If lawmakers do not act, charter schools will automatically reap a tuition increase, paid by the school districts, of \$1,500 per pupil when the law expires in June. It's a plan that Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie says he can accept, but the broader conference needs to review the language. "We started a discussion earlier I'd say with this compromise solution and we spoke to the conference about it," Heastie said. "I'd say other than the more detailed language I'd say we're OK with it." A Senate spokesman in a statement Thursday said no deal was in place yet, but talks continue, he said. "Senator Flanagan met this morning with the governor and other legislative leaders, and talks centered around a potential compromise that would bring resolution to the budget," he said. "As a result, he is discussing the proposed changes with a number of our members. While we have had these discussions, there is no final deal."

[New York Times](#)
[The Journal News](#)