The following report is from NRLA-NY Lobbyist, Todd Vandervort of The Vandervort Group.

State News:
The focus of legislative proceedings has been mainly on the Budget. The Senate and Assembly released their one-house budget proposals with their amendments to the Executive Budget, Joint Budget Conference Committees commenced, and negotiations took place in an attempt to reach an on-time budget by April 1.
Some of the issues of concern to NRLA in the budget are a single-use plastic bag ban, property tax cap (extension vs. making permanent), and prevailing wage. These issues were lobbied by small business organizations during NFIB-NY’s 2019 Small Business Day event in Albany on March 19.

Issues Update:
Retainage
A.574 (Braunstein). We have been speaking with Senators Breslin, Gaughran, and Metzger as possible Democratic sponsors in the Senate. We will have the sponsor in early April and will get the bill moving.

Unemployment Insurance Reform
S.327 / A.1004 (Akshar / Kolb) This bill would provide that employers are not liable for unemployment benefits for an employee who voluntarily leaves their employment and later files for unemployment from a subsequent employer. We are targeting two potential Democratic sponsors in the Assembly, Assemblyman Stirpe and Assemblyman McDonald, as well as Senator Breslin in the Senate, to give it a better chance of passage.

Unfair Religious Exemptions by the Amish
No movement on this issue. We are continuing to educate legislators on the importance of leveling the playing field with the Amish builders that do not have to pay taxes or workers compensation. This is an unfair advantage to lumber retailers and builders that must abide by NYS tax laws.

Commercial Claims
S.1832 / A.4360 (Gianaris / DenDekker) We met with Assemblyman DenDekker regarding his bill introduction that will raise the civil jurisdictional limits from the current $5,000 to $10,000 for commercial claims and small claims courts. We also spoke with the Office of Court Administration to gauge their interest in supporting the bill. We have worked with them the previous two times that we increased the limits.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)
The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation issued a Proposed Rule Making with Hearings Scheduled to regulate Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) in Architectural and Industrial Maintenance (AIM) Coatings. The purpose of the regulations is to set new and lower VOC limits for certain coating categories as well as to update categories and methods. The regs apply to any person that supplies, sells, offers for sale or manufactures architectural coatings for us in NYS. The hearings will be held on May 6, 2019 at 11:00 am at the DEC Office in Albany; and on May 13, 2019 at 11:00 am at SUNY Stony Brook.

Events:
New York Lobby Day will be held on May 6 in Albany. To fill out a registration form please contact Jamie McCormick at jmccormick@nrla.org.

Questions?
Please contact Kirk Ives, Director of Government Affairs at 518-880-6376 or kives@nrla.org.