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NEWS, 2A

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Relics tell history's tale



Senior Librarian Elizabeth Jakubowski with campaign material for Franklin D. Roosevelt at the New York State Library. The flyer, pictured below, helped reelect FDR to Albany, which in turn propelled him to the Oval Office years later. PETER CARR/THE JOURNAL NEWS

A look at NY political artifacts across 250 years of U.S. history

Emily Barnes New York State Team | USA TODAY NETWORK

On the third floor of the New York State Museum building in Albany one recent morning, a treasure trove of American relics usually kept hidden from public view fill a seemingly never-ending room. • Up here, the mostly darkened space is quiet and warm and you can smell the age of the rarely seen pieces in every inhale. It is an escape from the shiny white marble walls and the liveliness of the visitors exploring surrounding levels where these items may one day end up on display. • Labeled brown and blue-gray cardboard boxes line rows of metal shelving and ornate historic furniture nearly brushing the low ceiling is stacked on heartier metal racks toward the middle of the room. • At the end of one of the aisles, a battered green football helmet and tools used in the 1971 Attica prison riot are positioned neatly on the floor. Several large oxidized ice harvesting tools lie closer to the door. A few more items – chairs with ties to former New York governors – stand out. • In many ways, these carefully preserved artifacts of New York's political and social history hold the secret story of the state's crucial role in shaping American ideals and rights over the past 250 years. See NY'S ROLE, Page 3A

Study shows new NY middle class income

Madison Scott New York Connect Team USA TODAY NETWORK

Would you be considered middle class in New York?

As prices and the cost of living continue to rise, it can be hard to distinguish what it actually means to be middle class and whether it's still attainable in 2026.

The expectation of being middle class is often deemed by home ownership, raising kids, having emergency funds, having retirement savings and being able to splurge on the occasional vacation. Pew Research defines the middle class in practice as making two-thirds to two times the median income.

However, meeting the mark of being middle class varies by state and its local job market, housing affordability and

infrastructure, among other factors.

SmartAsset published a study to determine what it means to be middle class in each state by ranking all of the states and the 100 largest cities in the United States based on the upper bound of middle-class income using data from the 2024 U.S. Census and Pew Research Center studies.

NY middle class incomes

The median middle-class household income in New York is \$85,820, which ranked the No. 15 spot out of the highest median incomes across the country, according to SmartAsset.

To be considered middle class in NY, the SmartAsset study states that you would have to make at least \$57,213. Any household income above \$171,640 would be considered upper class, ac-

ording to the study.

New York's neighboring states, Massachusetts and New Jersey, have the two highest median incomes across the country, with Massachusetts' median being \$104,828, and New Jersey's being \$104,294.

\$35,000 in Buffalo = middle class

The SmartAsset study found that Buffalo, New York, is among the 10 cities with the lowest bound on middle-class income, where you would have to make just shy of \$35,000 to be considered middle class.

Buffalo ranked No. 98 out of 100 cities, meaning it has the third-lowest income needed to be middle-class, with its median household income for the

See MIDDLE CLASS, Page 2A

Trump's health a growing concern

Over half of Americans concerned about president's fitness

Zac Anderson USA TODAY

President Donald Trump wanted everyone to know he didn't fall asleep on the job.

Following a lengthy Cabinet meeting in December during which the president closed his eyes for stretches, giving the appearance he was dozing, Trump offered Cabinet officials an explanation at their next gathering. He told them he had shut his eyes at the previous meeting because it was "boring."

"I didn't sleep, I just closed them because I wanted to get the hell out of here," Trump said, adding: "I don't sleep much."

After mocking his predecessor with the nickname "Sleepy Joe," Trump has increasingly faced questions about his own fitness as his second term wears

See TRUMP, Page 6A

COMPTROLLER RACE

DiNapoli has two Democratic challengers

Emily Barnes New York State Team USA TODAY NETWORK

Incumbent New York State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli is facing two Democratic opponents in this year's June 23 primary.

Former affordable housing non-profit leader Drew Warsaw and former Kansas legislator Raj Goyle are attempting to oust DiNapoli from his nearly 20-year tenure as comptroller. Early voting in the primary begins June 13.

Here's what to know about the candidates.

Who is Tom DiNapoli?



DiNapoli

DiNapoli has held the position since 2007 after first being selected for the role after the state's previous comptroller, Alan Hevesi, pleaded guilty to defrauding the state and resigned. He has beaten Republican opponents four times since then. Most recently, he was re-elected by more than 14 points in 2022.

See COMPTROLLER, Page 2A

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