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Social Security is paid during shutdown

But other SSA services are limited by furloughs

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As the government shutdown enters its third week, several federal agencies

— including the Social Security Administration (SSA) — remain affected by furloughs and are not operating at full capacity. The shutdown began on Oct. 1 and has led to hundreds of thousands of federal employees being furloughed, including many at the SSA. As a result, some Social Security services are currently limited.

Here's what you need to know:

Social Security payments will continue during shutdown

Social Security benefits will not be interrupted during a government shutdown despite the lapse in federal funding appropriations. These benefit programs are not de-

pendent on congressional approval, so the ongoing standoff between lawmakers does not impact Social Security payments. This includes:

- Retirement benefits
- Disability benefits (SSDI)
- Survivor benefits

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Four of the 18 counties that have executives already hold votes in even-numbered years and won't have to change. PETER CARR/THE JOURNAL NEWS FILE

NY's top court OKs moving elections to even years

Hope is that it will up voting for local races

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New Yorkers will soon cast votes for local offices on the same ballots as contests for president and governor due to the end of a legal battle over consolidating those races. In a ruling on Oct. 16 the state's highest court upheld a 2023 law that requires counties and towns to hold elections for certain offices in even-numbered years instead of odd years. That final decision axes off-year races for most offices in nearly all of New York's 933 towns, and for executive and legislature in counties that have those elected positions. Democratic lawmakers made that shift to increase voting in local races, by holding them in years with higher turnout for state and federal races. A slew of counties — including Rockland, Dutchess, Orange and Oneida — and towns

For the 57 New York counties outside New York City, executives and legislators are the only offices covered by the new law. Elections for other county officials, including district attorney, sheriff and clerk, are regulated by the state constitution and couldn't be changed by statute.

sued to overturn the law, winning an initial ruling but then losing on appeal in the Appellate Division and now at the Court of Appeals. **Why NY's highest court upheld even-year election law** In the 14-page, unanimous decision, the Court of Appeals rejected the argument that the law violated "home rule" rights New York has given its municipalities in the state constitution. The counties and towns that sued claimed those powers include determining when to hold local elections — without interference from the state legislature. The seven justices disagreed, declar-

ing that home rule doesn't limit the "authority of the legislature to mandate the timing of certain elections." **How does this affect upcoming elections?** The ruling means candidates running on Nov. 4 for affected county and town offices will serve one year less than they ordinarily would. So winners of the Westchester and Rockland county executive races, for example, will serve for three years rather than four. The 2023 law made those one-time term adjustments for the 2025 and

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Police seek help finding Playland vandals

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Westchester County police are seeking the public's help in identifying three people suspected of vandalizing and burglarizing Playland amusement park in September. Police said the suspects cut or ripped out fiber optic cables in an electrical room, snatched 200 stuffed animals and attempted to throw a photo booth off the boardwalk at the amusement park in Rye. Entering Playland overnight, Sept. 23-24, the individuals hauled away the stuffed animals in garbage bags, Westchester County Police said in a news release. Now, police said they are asking the public's help in attempting to identify suspects. "The trio arrived on the Playland beach in a small boat a little before midnight on Sept. 23," police said. They then climbed a fence to enter the amusement area. In the electrical room, the suspects cut or ripped-out fiber optic cables that are used for phone and internet service, police said. The suspects were unable to throw the photo booth off the boardwalk.

Westchester County Executive issues statement on Playland incident

"This incident is both infuriating and heartbreaking. Being young is one thing — being destructive is another. I am angry and deeply disappointed by the actions of the individuals who broke into Playland Park and caused such senseless destruction," Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins said, in part, in a statement provided by a spokesperson for Westchester County Police. "Playland is a place that brings joy and memories to families across Westchester and beyond — not a playground for reckless behavior or criminal acts. These young people didn't just damage property; they violated a beloved community space and disrupted services that our staff work tirelessly to maintain." County police said detectives have previously shared photos and case information with law enforcement in the region, but suspects have not been identified. Officials ask that anyone who recognizes the suspects call detectives at 914-864-7916. Police said they also have phone and electronic tips lines for the public.

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