



Heastie said he would meet again on Monday with Gov. Andrew Cuomo and leaders of the state Senate. | AP Photo

Lawmakers hope a full budget will come before May 31

By **JIMMY VIELKIND** and **KESHIA CLUKEY** | 04/03/17 03:17 PM EDT

ALBANY — New York state government should be able to keep its lights on through the end of May under a stopgap budget resolution that the Legislature is set to approve Monday.

But is that the new deadline for a full budget agreement?

“I’m ready to continue to talk,” said Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, a Democrat from the Bronx. “Passing this extender isn’t a punt of our duties. I’m just trying to make sure that government doesn’t shut down, and people who work hard for the state of New York and school districts and hospitals can continue to do the godly work that they do.”

Heastie said he would meet again on Monday with Gov. Andrew Cuomo and leaders of the state Senate, and that there “hopefully will just turn out to be a few days of delay” before a global budget agreement is reached.

Members of his chamber still were preparing to consider two temporary budget bills on Monday afternoon. The state Senate passed both bills by votes of 46-15

Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan, a Republican from Long Island, said on the chamber floor that he believed lawmakers would act soon after returning from an 18-day break for Passover and Easter that is now slated to start on Wednesday.

“In my opinion, I don’t think we’re going to wait until the end of May,” he said. “I think we can have a budget by the time we come back.”

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Gerald Benjamin, a professor of political science at SUNY New Paltz, said lawmakers often act in response to “natural deadlines” rather than legal deadlines — like midnight on Friday, when New York’s current budget legally lapsed — that can be seen as arbitrary. Several lobbyists and other decades-long veterans of the Capitol noted that the Legislature lost leverage when it slipped past the deadline.

Said Benjamin: “Extenders give [Cuomo] a hammer. The bargaining process has been increasingly tilted in his favor, no question, and I think that’s a bad thing.”

Rank-and-file lawmakers are also eager to cut a deal. They won’t get paychecks until a full budget is adopted.

“I think the whole thing sucks and I’m very disappointed that we couldn’t come together,” said Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi, a Democrat from Utica. He got two flat tires while spending the weekend in Albany for an unfruitful series of conferences.

Assemblywoman Pat Fahy, a Democrat from Albany, said lawmakers shouldn’t leave until there’s a deal this week, setting up Friday as another “natural deadline.”

“We’re at an impasse but right now, quite frankly, I think it’s really important that we focus on the big picture and finish these deals, like just finish them,” she said. “When you miss deadlines things really begin to unravel, so I think we lock the doors, we do the extender because we don’t want to shut government down, I’m all for that, but then we lock the doors and we finish this in the next day or so.”