CUOMO’S $30M subway decorations — "SUMMER OF HELL, PART II"— NYC’s end-run around rules for housing juvenile inmates — Undocumented New Yorkers’ “City of Fear”

By Gene Rossi

By Jimmy Vielkind in Albany and Laura Nahmias in Manhattan, with Daniel Lippman

Joe Percoco, Sheldon Silver, Alain Kaloyeros and Dean Skelos. Guilty, guilty, guilty and guilty. You’d think a two-term governor whose tenure has coincided with four high-profile corruption convictions would be heading to defeat, if he decided to run at all. But Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who was never accused of wrongdoing during the trials, continues to poll well as he seeks a third term this year. And he appears to be unconcerned about any possible electoral consequences arising from those trials.

Story Continued Below

“I think there has never been a suggestion that I did anything wrong,” the governor said last week in Brooklyn, asked if he thought the convictions would have an impact in either his primary contest against Cynthia Nixon or the general election in November.

Political experts say Cuomo may have good reason to shrug off the scandals, even though he campaigned for governor for the first time in 2010 as a prosecutor — he has served a term as attorney general — who went after corrupt politicians. “The New York electorate seems to be inured to corruption, they seem to believe it’s normal and expected behavior,” said Gerald Benjamin, a professor of political science at SUNY New Paltz. “The cynicism is manifested in low turnout, and the inability to get any serious traction for reform. The Legislature has learned that reform is not a live-or-die issue.” Read more here

IT’S MONDAY. The Mets and Yankees each took one in the Subway Series, but Sunday’s game was rained out. Got tips, suggestions or thoughts? Let us know ... By email: JVielkind@politico.com, LNahmias@politico.com, and daniel@politico.com, or on Twitter: @JimmyVielkind, @nahmias, and @dlippman.

WHERE’S ANDREW? On a quick trip to Puerto Rico.

WHERE’S BILL? Taking a ride on the Staten Island Ferry, hanging out with Staten Island Borough President Jimmy Oddo, making an announcement about Lyme
Disease Prevention, and appearing on NY1's Inside City Hall.


QUOTE OF THE DAY: “You’re in government, you’re supposed to make things happen, you’re supposed to actually produce results for people,” Cuomo said of Bill de Blasio’s NYCHA record. “When we get to the pearly gates, I’m sure God will have a lot to say about it.”

** A message from Purdue Pharma: We make prescription opioids. And we want to limit their use. For over 25 years, we’ve developed opioid medications for patients with chronic pain, and we are acutely aware of the public health risks they can create. As such, we believe the country needs a new approach to prescribing opioids. **

WHAT ALBANY IS READING:

SENTENCING SILVER — New York Times’ Benjamin Weiser: “Sheldon Silver, 74, is to be sentenced on July 27 in Manhattan, and federal prosecutors asked the judge on Friday to impose a sentence ‘substantially in excess’ of 10 years. But Mr. Silver’s lawyers had a more creative proposal for how he could pay his debt to society. After a ‘meaningful custodial sentence,’ they suggested, he should be ordered to perform “rigorous” community service, like running a special help desk. In that role, they said, he would be helping New Yorkers ‘navigate their way through the state bureaucracy to answer their questions, and maximize their chances of receiving benefits to which they may be entitled.’ He would be expressing his remorse, they said, and using ‘his unique skills to assist his fellow New Yorkers.’” Read more here

WHAT ABOUT BUFFALO? — Buffalo News’ Tom Precious and Bob McCarthy: “At a time when the words ‘Buffalo’ and ‘Billion’ are linked in negative headlines across the state, Cuomo’s westward forays are proving far less frequent – even in this election year. State records indicate the governor has made only one trip to the state’s second-largest city since November, and none since April. Cuomo has also found himself doing public events for as many days in the Caribbean as in Western New York the past 10 months. His absence coincided with the months leading up to a federal trial that ended with the guilty verdicts of four men involved
in state economic development projects, including Cuomo's signature Buffalo Billion program. But there is another factor: Cynthia Nixon, the activist challenging Cuomo in a Democratic Party primary in a contest that has been heavily New York City-focused.” [Read more here]

**ON THE TRAIL:** Cuomo met Saturday with members of the Congressional Black Caucus, and on Sunday was endorsed by the leaders of several dozen tenant associations from New York City Housing Authority projects, where the governor pushed for a change in management and blasted New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio's competence. Cuomo also did something unusual: retail campaigning. The Democratic governor stopped by a barbecue in the Bronx with State Sen. Jamaal Bailey and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie as well as the Eastchester Gardens Family Day. The idea here is to buttress his support among black voters, where he holds a lead over Cynthia Nixon. The “Sex and the City” actor spoke at Ozy Fest in Central Park on Saturday, and later swung by a South Asian street festival. — *Jimmy Vielkind*

**SENATE DEMS OUTPERFORM GOP ON FUNDRAISING FRONT, WITH A CAVEAT — POLITICO's Bill Mahoney:** Democrats in the state Senate easily outraised Republicans over the past six months, and the amount of money that party members have in their campaign accounts is closer to the GOP’s total than at any point since 2010. But this financial explosion comes with one major caveat: A sizable share of the Democratic cash is destined to be spent on intra-party warfare, while the Republicans remain laser-focused on maintaining their majority. Republican candidates and their centralized committees raised $7.08 million since January, and they sat on a combined $15.57 million as of mid-July. Democrats raised $8.71 million and have $13.21 million...Notably, however, the Democratic boom this year is due not just to a surge of support in districts that might be competitive in November, but to the massive number of Democrats raising money to run against each other. [Read more here]

— *Daily News’s Ken Lovett:* “Julia Salazar, who is running for state Senate from Brooklyn, was a registered Republican before moving to New York and only became a Dem a year ago, records show.” [Read it here.]

**SUMMER OF HELL, REDUX — New York Times’s Emma Fitzsimmons:** “Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, after declaring the subway to be in a state of emergency, promised that a rescue plan by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority would deliver results. The authority’s chairman, Joseph J. Lhota, said subway riders would see improvements ‘relatively quickly.’ But one year later, subway service remains in many ways the same — dismal. Long delays continue to upend New Yorkers’ lives. Trains are still breaking down at an aggravating pace. Signal equipment dating to the Great Depression repeatedly wreaks havoc across the system. The authority’s own statistics are a mixed bag: They show minor progress in some areas, but no major boost in reliability, despite spending hundreds of millions of dollars on repairs. The on-time rate for trains hovers near 65 percent on weekdays — about the same as a year ago and the lowest rate since the transit crisis of the 1970s, when graffiti, breakdowns and violence plagued the system.” [Read it here.]

**MEANWHILE—** “Gov. Cuomo ordered the cash-strapped MTA to waste up as
much as $30 million on his latest vanity project — retiling two city tunnels in the state’s blue-and-gold color scheme — instead of using the dough for desperately needed subway repairs, The Post has learned. The boondoggle began soon after the taxpayer-funded agency ordered white tiles to reline the Brooklyn-Battery and Queens-Midtown tunnels after Superstorm Sandy, documents show. The governor got wind of the plan — and insisted that the cash-strapped transit agency add stripes of blue and gold, thinking nothing of the additional $20-$30 million cost, according to sources and project documentation. “The white tile had already been ordered, but he insisted that [the walls] be in the state colors,” a top construction executive told The Post. — New York Post’s Danielle Fururaro, Lois Weiss and Nolan Hicks: Read it here.

WHAT CITY HALL IS READING:

NYCHA’S SINS — Daily News’ Greg Smith: In January 2013, then-Mayor Michael Bloomberg stood in the community room of a Harlem NYCHA development and made a daunting promise to eliminate by year’s end a staggering backlog of 420,000 repair requests from public housing tenants. And then NYCHA did everything possible to game the numbers, a Daily News investigation has found. Employees forged tenants’ signatures on pretend inspections that never occurred. Workers were told to door-knock tenants at times when they would likely not be home so the repair request could be closed. In fact, starting that winter, there was a systemwide effort initiated by NYCHA headquarters to close out repair requests without doing any actual repairs simply by tagging the request as TNH — “Tenant Not Home.” Read more here.

ON PAGE A1 — “With Prison Transfers, City Sidesteps Its Ban on Isolating Youths” — New York Times’s Ashley Southall and Jan Ransom: “Three years ago, when New York City banned solitary confinement for inmates younger than 22 and curtailed it for others, Mayor Bill de Blasio held up the policy as a model for reform. But since the rules were approved, the city has stepped up a longstanding practice of transferring some inmates to correctional facilities elsewhere in the state where no such restrictions exist. Dozens of New York City inmates, including several teenagers, have ended up in solitary confinement. Transfers of inmates 21 and younger increased sharply starting in 2015, the year the city adopted the solitary ban, and except for a drop in 2017, the number of such transfers has remained well above the levels seen before the ban, according to Correction Department data. At least 10 young inmates have been transferred from New York City this year, including eight who are in solitary at one upstate jail...New York City has long had the power to make such transfers if an inmate is especially vulnerable to attack or presents a high risk to other inmates or to guards. But the sharp overall increase in transfers since the solitary ban was put into place for city jails suggests that transfers to other jurisdictions have become an end-run around the city’s own rules on solitary confinement.” Read it here.

FOUR YEARS LATER — Cop who caused the chokehold death of Eric Garner hit with NYPD charges — Daily News’s Thomas Tracy, Adam Shrier, Graham Rayman, Rocco Parascandola and Janon Fisher: “The cop blamed in the death of Eric Garner was charged Friday night with violating NYPD regulations against using a chokehold to subdue a suspect, sources told the Daily
News. The Civilian Complaint Review Board will prosecute the departmental case against Officer Daniel Pantaleo, who has been on desk duty since the July 17, 2014 incident.” Read it here.

**TISH’S NEW LANDLORD LIST — New York Post’s Anna Sanders:** After shaming the city’s “worst landlords” for years, Public Advocate Letitia James is hauling in donations from her state attorney general campaign from developers, management companies, and other real estate interests. The real estate industry has donated at least $213,655 to James’ AG bid since May, a Post review of state campaign filings shows. That’s nearly one fifth of her total $1.16 million haul through mid-July. Sixteen limited liability companies in real estate gave $64,500, including an LLC under big city developer Two Trees. Donors linked to real estate firm and film studio developer Steiner NYC have given $15,100. Read more here.

**“Questioning real-world learning at ultra-Orthodox schools”— Associated Press’s Karen Matthews:** “At the ultra-Orthodox Jewish schools Pesach Eisen attended in Brooklyn, most of the day was spent studying religious texts with classes taught in Yiddish. One class at the end of the day was spent on secular subjects including English and math, enough to be ‘able to go to the food stamps office and apply.’ Complaints that schools like Eisen’s run by New York’s strictly observant Hasidic Jews barely teach English, math, science, or social studies have fueled a movement to demand stricter oversight by state and local educational authorities. Critics plan to file a lawsuit on Monday in federal court, seeking to stop the state from enforcing legislation that was intended to shield the schools, called yeshivas, from some government oversight...The planned lawsuit by Young Advocates for Fair Education, or YAFFED, which is pushing for improved secular education in the ultra-Orthodox schools, names Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo and the state Department of Education’s top two officials as defendants. Department of Education spokeswoman Emily DeSantis said the department is working on updating its guidance on equivalency of instruction at the yeshivas.” Read it here.

**INVESTIGATION: “Inside the land deals that benefited connected Long Islanders,” by Newsday’s Paul LaRocco:** “In 2001, as Thomas Suozzi prepared to take office as Nassau’s first Democratic county executive in decades, he looked for new ideas to fix the deficit-ridden budget he’d inherit. To urge county employees to be part of the process, Suozzi created a $20,000 fund of private donations to reward their best ideas. He named two businessmen to oversee it and hand out the prizes. One was Michael Held, a campaign supporter and former Oyster Bay Cove village planning board chairman who ran a stationery company. ‘Who better to come up with ideas to save money in county government than the employees themselves?’ Held said at the news conference, where he stood with Suozzi to announce the fund. Years later, Held became a beneficiary of another of Suozzi’s initiatives. In 2009, the county bought 8 acres of Held’s property in Oyster Bay Cove for $2.9 million — part of the $100 million it spent on open space preservation under Nassau’s landmark Environmental Bond Acts. A Newsday investigation found that roughly $30 million of that money, both under Suozzi and his successor, Republican Edward Mangano, was paid to political contributors and people with ties to county politics, the property selection process; or both. Those who helped shape the program say that sellers’ political connections weren’t relevant to the process that resulted in properties such
as Held’s being recommended for purchase. Others say those types of connections weren’t even brought to their attention – the county then didn’t strictly enforce the submission of forms for disclosure of campaign contributions or other political ties.”

Read it here.

UGH — “Target’s East Village outpost debuts with CBGB-themed storefront.” See it here.

TRUMP’S NEW YORK

“CITY OF FEAR: 20,000 of New York’s immigrants have been identified for deportation since Trump took office. The rest worry they’ll be next.”

— New York Magazine, with the Marshall Project: “An estimated half a million New Yorkers are undocumented. Whether they’ve lived here for two months or 20 years, they came to this city of immigrants — a place where more than a third of the population was born in another country — looking for the same things that have brought newcomers here for centuries: work and school opportunities, religious freedom, family, and a haven from violence, persecution, political upheaval, and natural disaster. In this 'sanctuary city,' the local government promises to defend New Yorkers regardless of status, restricting law-enforcement cooperation with federal immigration agents (although not prohibiting it entirely, to the chagrin of many immigrant advocates). But in recent months, amid headlines about terrified toddlers in 'baby jails' and a president who refers to migrants as an 'infestation,' it’s become increasingly clear that even New York City doesn’t feel safe for the undocumented.”

STAT: “In the eight months following Donald Trump’s inauguration, ICE arrests in the region jumped by 67 percent compared to the same period in the previous year, and arrests of immigrants with no criminal convictions increased 225 percent. During that time, ICE arrested 2,031 people in its New York 'area of responsibility,' which includes the five boroughs and surrounding counties. These aren’t unprecedented numbers: ICE arrested almost four times as many people in 2010 in New York as it did last year, and it picks up far fewer people here than in other parts of the country.” Read it here.

On Page A1 — CAYUGA’S WINDFALL— USA Today’s Kevin McCoy:

“Officially classified as Unaccompanied Alien Children, thousands of the young migrants have been brought to the New York City facilities of a company called Cayuga Centers. The nonprofit has received millions of dollars from the federal government during the past several years to place the children in foster care until they can rejoin parents or other relatives. This year, a new and different wave of undocumented migrant children have joined the federal caravans traveling to Cayuga Centers and other social services providers. They were separated from their parents at the border by immigration agents for weeks as President Donald Trump's administration enforced a 'zero tolerance' policy against illegal immigration...As that process unfolds, Cayuga Centers, like similar social services agencies, has become the focus of an unwelcome spotlight as Americans debate potential solutions for illegal immigration...

If Cayuga Centers is doing good by serving migrant children, it is also
doing well for itself. Last year, the nonprofit said it had become ‘the largest provider of transitional foster homes for Central American children taken into custody while crossing the U.S. southern border.’ Federal contracts more than tripled Cayuga Centers’ annual budget in recent years as the company provided foster care, physical and mental health screening, schoolteachers and made efforts to return the children to their families. That income, accounting for what Connelly said was roughly half the nonprofit’s budget, has made Cayuga Centers a major provider and financial beneficiary in what has become a nearly $1 billion annual U.S. industry caring for migrant children. Grants by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for shelters, foster care and other services for these children have jumped from $74.5 million in 2007 to $958 million in 2017, according to a recent analysis by The Associated Press.” Read the story here.

HILL ON HELSINKI— POLITICO’s Rosa Goldensohn: Hillary Clinton sounded alarm bells about Putin’s prowess as a manipulator at an appearance in Central Park Saturday. The young, admiring crowd at the inaugural politics/food/music-themed OZY Fest cheered for Robert Mueller as they glugged cans of rosé. Clinton contrasted Obama’s deliberative approach to foreign policy threats with the current administration’s style: “They’re not even having meetings about this in this White House.” And while the former secretary of state did not explicitly say that she believes the president is being controlled by Putin, Clinton plainly painted the dots for the audience to connect. Read more here.

SOCIAL DATA:

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: former Rep. John Hall (D-N.Y.) is 7-0 … Joey Rault … Monica Lewinsky … Robert Parker Jr. is 71 … Recode’s Kat Borgerding … Alex Pareene … Josh Gross, SVP at Glover Park Group …

MAKING MOVES -- Jean Dorak is now the development manager at the Treatment Action Group. She most recently was program and membership manager at the Association For A Better New York. … Bianca Rajpersaud is now communications and events manager at the Association for a Better New York. She previously was director of communications for NYS Assemblyman Michael Cusick (D-Staten Island) and served in his district office for the past 2 years.

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- “Kaleigh Rogers, Stuart Thompson” -- Times: “The bride, 29, and groom, 32, met at Western University in London, Ontario, from which each graduated with honors. Mrs. Thompson is a reporter in New York with Motherboard, the science and technology website for Vice Media. She also received a master’s degree in journalism from Western University…. Mr. Thompson is the graphics director of The New York Times opinion section.” With a pic
https://nyti.ms/2LgESpR

-- “Leela Hauser, Justin Bozonelis”: “Mrs. Bozonelis, 32, is the global marketing director for media intelligence at LexisNexis, the legal and business information provider, in New York. She graduated from Champlain College in Burlington, Vt. … Mr. Bozonelis, 42, is a managing director at Cantor Fitzgerald, the financial services firm in New York, and is in charge of raising money for hedge funds in the United States. He graduated from N.Y.U. ... The couple met in 2015 at the coat
check of a New York bar that she was leaving and he was entering. ‘I literally stopped and introduced myself,’ Mr. Bozonelis said. ‘I was just taken with her beauty and her smile — she has a phenomenal smile.’ They had their first date a few months later.”

With a pic https://nyti.ms/2uVydGv

-- “Leela Vosko, Robert Hamlin”: “Ms. Vosko, 29, is the manager of marketing and communications at the Emerging Markets Private Equity Association in Washington. On July 30, she is to begin working as the director of marketing engagement at the Independent Community Bankers of America, a nonprofit trade association representing community banks, in Washington. She graduated from the New School. ... The groom, 31, is an associate investment officer focusing on the global financial technology sector at the International Finance Corporation, the World Bank's private investment arm in Washington. Mr. Hamlin graduated cum laude from Harvard, and received an M.B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania. ... The groom is the great-great-grandson of the late Senator Nelson W. Aldrich, Republican of Rhode Island.” With a pic https://nyti.ms/2zWEqI7

MORNING MEDIA, with POLITICO’s Michael Calderone:

DAILY NEWS IN LIMBO: New York Daily News columnist Harry Siegel wrote yesterday on the importance of local journalism at a precarious moment. "The thing I love about local news is that it doesn't scale," Siegel wrote. "It happens one court hearing or campaign or crime at a time so that you can fairly try and connect political decisions to individual people, the life of the city to that of its inhabitants."

- Siegel's column comes amid rumors that owner Tronc is aiming to make sweeping cuts at the Daily News beginning today or tomorrow. "Word is that the cuts are going to be severe - up to 30 percent in a newsroom that has already shrunk to about 85 staffers in recent years," the New York Post's Keith Kelly reported last week.
- On Sunday, The Daily News tweeted from its main account "just a few examples why we believe local journalism is so important" along with the tag, #SupportLocal Journalism.

You can read the full Morning Media column and sign up to receive it in your inbox by clicking here.

REAL ESTATE, with POLITICO New York’s Sally Goldenberg:

HIDE AND SEEK — "In New York City, Even the Cheapest Homes Are Waiting for Buyers," by Bloomberg's Oshrat Carmiel: "It's not just luxury-home listings that are piling up in New York City. Even units for less than $1 million — within reach of far more people than a Billionaires' Row penthouse — are hurting for buyers. In Manhattan, the inventory of sub-$1 million apartments surged 27 percent in June from a year earlier to 3,087, the most for the month since 2013, according to StreetEasy. Such listings jumped 17 percent to 2,738 in Brooklyn, and climbed 6 percent to 2,314 in Queens, a borough usually sought out for its relative affordability." Read the story here.

TAX TALKS — "Property tax reform commission meets for first time," by POLITICO's Sam Raskin: "A newly formed commission tasked with recommending ways to reform the city's often-criticized property tax system
gathered Friday for the first of several meetings. The hourlong meeting of the New York City Advisory Commission on Property Tax Reform marked the first step in fulfilling the mayor's first-term promise to review the property tax system during his second term in order to make it more 'transparent' and 'equitable.' Formed in May by Council Speaker Corey Johnson and Mayor Bill de Blasio, the commission will seek to address, among other matters, the tax classification system, the way property market values are determined and tax relief for low-income and senior homeowners. While it's widely accepted that the city's property tax system is outdated, inequitable and that property taxes for many in the city are unduly high, New York's elected leaders have been loath to bear the burden of changing the system." Read the story here.

You can find the free version of Sally’s real estate newsletter here: http://politi.co/2a1DgJk

AROUND NEW YORK:

— Taxpayers will shell out $325,000 in legal fees incurred by the Wandering Dago, a food truck the Cuomo administration sought to ban from the state Capitol complex in Albany.

— Meet the small donor from Philadelphia who is boosting progressive candidates in New York.

— Eric Hawkins will be Albany’s new police chief.

THE HOME TEAMS — Howard Megdal:

The Mets and Yankees were rained out, but Noah Syndergaard was diagnosed with hand, foot and mouth disease. He’ll miss at least one start. The announcement came at the end of a long press conference held by Mets assistant general manager John Ricco to explain things like why the Mets didn’t know Yoenis Cespedes is dealing with a chronic condition that he says requires surgery (the Mets want him to play through it, in meaningless games) and why they salary-dumped Jeurys Familia to Oakland, a franchise best known in popular culture for not having much money. Very on-brand, these Mets.

The day ahead: the Yankees are in Tampa Bay. The Mets host the Padres.

#UpstateAmerica: For no particular reason, Billy Joel wore a Syracuse University cap during an interview on CBS Sunday Morning.

#ZooYork: Dozens of raccoons are dead in New York City after an outbreak of a “zombie” virus.

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**A message from Purdue Pharma:** Purdue is working with sheriffs, doctors, pharmacists, and educators to address the opioid crisis.

Purdue Pharma advocates for prescribers and pharmacists to consult state Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) databases before writing or dispensing opioid prescriptions. Studies suggest doing so can reduce the number of opioid prescriptions written for non-medical use from multiple doctors. Our funding to the National Sheriffs’ Association helps law enforcement distribute the overdose rescue drug naloxone, which can save lives. And we’re part of a network bringing drug abuse prevention education to high school students across the country. America’s opioid crisis is the result of multiple factors. We believe that all stakeholders — healthcare leaders, drug manufacturers, policymakers, and public health officials—need to come together to develop and implement meaningful solutions. Learn more at [www.purduepharma.com](http://www.purduepharma.com) **