

TICKS DOWN



with Democrats in the majority.

his view, saying: "I think it's a mandate for public health that we pass that bill." Legislative officials say the bill is gathering momentum.

DRIVER'S LICENSES

One of the most controversial issues is whether to permit people who are in the country illegally to obtain driver's licenses.

Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie (D-Bronx) has said ex-

tending driver's licenses would ensure drivers have insurance, which could reduce hit-and-run accidents, and make it easier for farm laborers to get to work. The state's largest business lobby and some insurance companies also have come out in favor.

Republicans say the proposal shows "blatant disregard" for taxpayers and the rule of law. The key will be whether Long Island and upstate Democrats in the Senate support the bill or want to hold off for now.

POLICE SHOOTINGS



Cuomo wants a law designating the state attorney general, instead of local district attorneys, to handle any cases involving civilians shot by police. Advocates of the approach say local prosecutors work daily with police, and therefore, face too many conflicts of interest in such cases.

Cuomo issued an executive order four years ago giving the AG's office authority to handle such cases, although he said the move was temporary and could change with a new administration. He wants the concept enshrined in law.

FARM LABOR



Labor activists and some legislators are pushing for a "farmworkers' bill of rights," which would include a 40-hour workweek, an eight-hour work day and a day off per week. The New York Farm Bureau says the terms aren't workable during harvest and other busy parts of the growing season.

Labor received a significant boost in late May when a state appellate court ruled farmworkers should have collective bargaining rights like other workers. Some dairy groups are proposing a compromise: a 60-65 hour workweek and no strikes during certain months.

CHARTER SCHOOLS



Cuomo is a champion of expanding the number of charter schools, while a majority of Democratic legislators is opposed. That would appear to make expansion unlikely. But if lawmakers decide to take up an omnibus bill that combines all sorts of unrelated issues, don't count out charter schools. That's how they were authorized in the first place 20 years ago.

MORE INSIDE

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A27



In the suburbs, legalizing marijuana was supported 55-39 percent.

Poll: NYers favor legalized marijuana

BY MICHAEL GORMLEY
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ALBANY — Most New York voters want marijuana legalized for recreational use and oppose allowing immigrants in the country illegally to obtain driver's licenses, according to a poll released Monday.

The findings in the Siena Research Institute poll don't align with politics in Albany, where the bill to legalize marijuana is foundering and Democrats are trying to find a way to authorize driver's licenses for immigrants in the United States illegally.

Legalizing marijuana was supported by a 55-40 percent margin, including 61 percent of Democrats. Fifty-five percent of Republicans oppose the measure, according to the poll.

The poll found voters opposed the driver's license measure by 55 to 41, although 53 percent of Democrats support it. Eighty-two percent of Republicans oppose the measure.

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo and progressive Democratic majority leaders of the State Senate and Assembly support legalizing marijuana beyond medicinal uses, but the more moderate contingent of Long Island senators stands in the way. Similarly, the coalition of six Long Island senators so far is not supporting the authorization of driver's licenses for immigrants in the country illegally, citing opposition from their constituents, law enforcement and medical professionals.

In the New York City suburbs, including Long Island,

providing driver's licenses to immigrants not in the country legally was opposed 52-40 percent. Supporters say the bill would make the roads safer and allow immigrants to get to work and to day care without threatening public safety. Since 2007, when then-Gov. Eliot Spitzer tried to adopt a license measure, opponents have feared that driver's licenses would be used by terrorists to gain access to sensitive areas.

Legalizing marijuana was supported in the suburbs 55-39 percent.

Both issues are major goals of the progressives who won control of the Senate in November's elections and who continue to rule the Assembly.

A majority of New Yorkers continues to oppose the licenses measure, said Steven Greenberg of the Siena poll. It is "supported by Democrats, as well as black, Latino and younger voters . . . white voters and voters 55 and older oppose it, while New York City voters are evenly divided."

The poll also found strong support for eliminating the religious exemption for vaccinating children, another major issue with which the legislature and Cuomo are wrestling in the waning session, scheduled to end June 19.

The poll interviewed 812 voters by telephone from June 2 to 6 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.1 percentage points.

MORE INSIDE

Lobbying for pot bill
A12

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