

## MORE STEPS BY GILLIBRAND TOWARD 2020

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand is moving aggressively toward an expected presidential bid, filling out key staff positions, traveling to key states and nearing a choice on the location for a campaign headquarters.

The New York Democrat is expected to make her debut in the leadoff caucus state of Iowa next week. She plans to headline a Woodbury County Democrats Truman Club gathering at a private home in Sioux City on Friday.

Gillibrand is considering a February announcement, according to one person familiar with the discussions, but the partial government shutdown could impact on the timing.

The senator is filling out important campaign staff positions, including recruiting Meredith Kelly, the former spokeswoman for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, to head her communications efforts, according to the person. Alexandria Phillips, Gillibrand's congressional press secretary and a former Hillary Clinton aide, and Jess Fassler, who served as Gillibrand's Senate chief of staff, will also join the campaign, the person said.

Gillibrand's team is eyeing Troy as a headquarters.

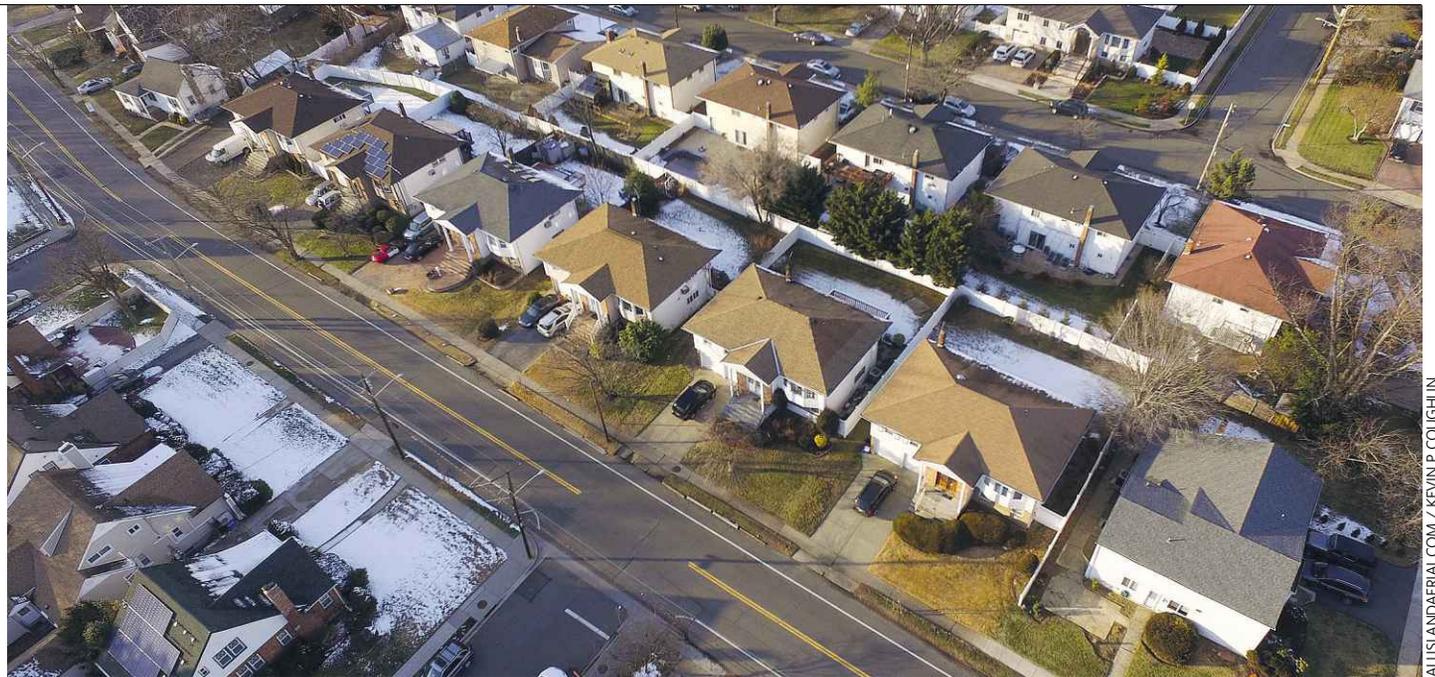
## Player rakes in nearly \$1M at Jake's slot

A \$10 slot machine bet at Jake's 58 Hotel & Casino won the player nearly \$1 million.

The Islandia casino late Thursday announced its record winner on Facebook, saying "Congratulations to the lucky player who turned a \$10 bet on #WheelOfFortune Triple Stars Progressive into a major win of \$984,420.36!"

Just below the statement, it posted a picture of a bright blue video bandit displaying the exact windfall, down to the penny.

A casino official was not immediately available to comment Friday. — JOAN GRALLA



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The tax-cap law, which took effect in 2012-13, was designed to slow growth in local property taxes, which rank among the nation's highest.

# School tax cap again set at 2%

2019-20 figure is the maximum state law allows

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New York State's baseline cap on growth in school taxes will be 2 percent in 2019-20, the state comptroller's office announced Friday, marking the second consecutive year that limits on taxation will be set at the highest level allowed under state law.

"We would certainly consider that good news," said Kenneth Bossert, superintendent of Elwood schools and president of the Suffolk County School Superintendents Association.

Bossert noted that next year's financial picture for schools won't be clear until Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo and the legislature agree on a statewide package of financial aid for education.

That process starts when the governor issues his budget proposals on Tuesday and, under

law, is supposed to conclude by April 1 with a final budget agreement.

The tax-cap law, which took effect in the 2012-13 school year, limits tax-levy increases to 2 percent or the inflation rate, whichever is lower. Levies are the total dollar amounts raised through property taxation.

The baseline cap is officially set annually by the comptroller's office. The national inflation rate has been running around 2.2 percent.

On Long Island, school taxes account for about two-thirds of property owners' total bills.

School districts use the baseline as a starter for calculating local caps, which can be higher, equal to or lower than the state's 2 percent baseline, depending upon a variety of factors. Those include local expenses that are exempt from caps, such as voter-approved borrowing for school construction and renovation.

A district can exceed its cap limit only by winning a supermajority vote of 60 percent or better on its proposed spend-

ing plan. Budget votes this year are set for May 21.

The baseline cap applies to 676 school districts statewide, including the 124 on the Island.

The law, generally regarded as a major Cuomo initiative, was designed to slow growth in local property taxes, which rank among the nation's highest. Since it took effect, the law, coupled with the impact of the 2007-08 financial crisis and subsequent downturn, has dramatically reduced growth in levies that previously ranged between 4 percent and 10 percent annually.

"Really, that 2 percent limit was put in so people like me could afford to live here," said Fred Gorman, a Nesconset civic leader and regional taxpayer advocate. "If that 2 percent weren't in place, there's no telling how much we'd be paying in school taxes."

In addition to school districts, the law applies to counties, municipalities and other local government. Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli's office calculates a separate baseline for school districts.

## The baseline tax cap year by year

The statewide allowable tax-levy increase for school districts is calculated by the state comptroller's office as a baseline cap figure.

Under state law, the baseline is 2 percent or the inflation rate, whichever is lower. Each district has its own tax-cap limit that is based on the statewide figure but adjusted for exemptions allowed under the law.

Here are statewide caps since New York's law took effect:

- 2012-13: **2%**
- 2013-14: **2%**
- 2014-15: **1.46%**
- 2015-16: **1.62%**
- 2016-17: **0.12%**
- 2017-18: **1.26%**
- 2018-19: **2%**
- 2019-20: **2%**