

★ Urging permanent cap

Cuomo, officials say tax relief is crucial to NY, LI

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Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo on Thursday urged swift passage of a permanent property tax cap, saying he's "committed" to making it part of the final state budget.

Cuomo told a crowd at SUNY Old Westbury that "with the State Senate holding firm, we're going to make it a priority, we're committed to not getting a budget done without this tax cap being made permanent and a middle-class tax cut."

Speaking at an event sponsored by the Long Island Association, Cuomo said he hoped to cut taxes on the middle class in 2019. He also repeated his criticism of President Donald Trump's tax legislation that imposed a \$10,000 limit on federal deductions for state and local property taxes.

"We've had it in place," Cuomo said of the tax cap, which was implemented in 2012. "So when people are worried about the increase on the federal side that they know it's going to be lower on the state side."

Nonetheless, Cuomo said he expected the permanent tax cap proposal to be "politically controversial."

The tax cap is set to expire in 2020.

The State Senate last month approved the permanent tax



Cuomo introduces Nassau County Executive Laura Curran at the forum. ■ Video: newsday.com/li

cap. The Democratic-led Assembly in the past has sought to tie extension of the cap with renewal of state rent control, which expires this year.

Since the state cap was imposed, local property tax growth has averaged 1.9 percent, compared with 5.3 percent growth between 2000 and 2010, according to the Cuomo administration. The cap has generated \$24.4 billion in savings to taxpayers across the state, the administration said.

Long Island elected officials who back a permanent cap say it would eliminate the need for an extension every few years.

Nassau County Executive Laura Curran, a Democrat, said "We must take action to ease the burden on our families."

Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone, a Democrat, said "Success in the future is not guaranteed, if we don't make the right decisions. ... Making this tax cap permanent is critical for Long Island's future."

State Sen. Todd Kaminsky of Long Beach, the senior Democrat of the Long Island Senate delegation, told reporters, "Making the tax cap permanent is a critical part of our mission this year, something the Senate was able to do but we need to get it over the line."

Kevin Law, President of the Long Island Association, said the tax cap "is working. We need it to stay competitive; it's time we make it permanent."

Burning mattress caught under truck on LIE

BY ELLEN YAN
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An armored truck with a burning mattress wedged in its chassis almost caught fire as it ferried about \$2 million on the Long Island Expressway on Thursday night in Manorville, Suffolk police said.

The driver of a GardaWorld truck did not see the mattress on the roadway until the last second as he headed west on the LIE, not far from Exit 69, said highway Sgt. Pete Scheuerer, one of the officers responding to the

scene. The GardaWorld crew was headed back to their base in Long Island City when a mattress appeared, police said.

"He thought he just ran it over, but when he ran it over, it got wedged up in the axle," the sergeant said. "He was probably driving for like a mile or two. The friction of the mattress rubbing against the ground probably caught a spark and caught on fire ..."

Inside the truck, the three employees noticed smoke gushing from their vehicle about 8:30 p.m., and when they pulled onto

the shoulder, they noticed flames on the underside of the truck, authorities said.

The employees stood guard as Manorville firefighters put out the flames in about five minutes, said First Assistant Chief Phil Zackman Jr.

Firefighters tried to make sure there was no fire inside the truck, but the key didn't work on the back door, Zackman said. They tried to cut off the hinges with an electric saw, but that failed too, he said. When they cut a hole in the truck's roof, a thick plume of smoke escaped

from the inside, he said.

Finally, the key worked on a side door, and a GardaWorld employee crawled inside to check on the contents, authorities said.

"Some of the bags, they had melted a little bit because the flames were under the truck and it was like a frying pan inside," Zackman said. Those bags were empty, he said.

But the cash was wet but unburnt, officials said.

The GardaWorld employees were not injured. "All the money is accounted for," said Scheuerer. "I'm still broke."

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THIS DATE IN HISTORY

1893 Nikola Tesla first publicly demonstrated radio before the National Electric Light Association in St. Louis, transmitting electromagnetic energy without wires.
1932 Charles A. Lindbergh Jr., 20 months old, was kidnapped near Hopewell, New Jersey. (Remains identified as those of the child were found the following May.)
1954 Four Puerto Rican nationalists opened fire from the House of Representatives spectators' gallery, wounding five members of Congress.
1961 President John F. Kennedy signed an order establishing the Peace Corps.
1971 A bomb went off in a U.S. Capitol men's room; the radical Weather Underground claimed responsibility.
1974 H.R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman, ex-Attorney General John Mitchell and ex-assistant Attorney General Robert Mardian were indicted in connection with the Watergate break-in. (The four were convicted in January 1975. Mardian's conviction was reversed later.)
1981 IRA member Bobby Sands began a hunger strike at the Maze Prison in Northern Ireland; he died 65 days later.