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### **Emergency Response**

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The noon to 4 p.m. exercise was based at Colonie Town Park on North Schermerhorn Road. Helicopter crews skimmed the river's surface to fill Bambi Buckets with 660 gallons of water — with a weight of nearly 2.8 tons — and then dropped the payload back into the river.

Read more on this story at the Times Union

<https://aerialfiremag.com/2024/04/16/bucket-bearing-helicopter-crews-drill-on-mohawk-river-in-colonie/>

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#### **Hear Helicopters in the Mohawk Valley? It's Part of a New York Army Guard Training**

**WKTV, April 15, 2024::**

UTICA, N.Y. (WKTV) -- New York Army National Guard Black Hawk helicopter crews will conduct wildfire fighting training drills on the Mohawk River.

The drills will occur between the Twin Bridges and Route 9 on April 15 and potentially April 16-18.

The UH-60M helicopters, stationed at Albany International Airport, will utilize Bambi Buckets to practice retrieving and dropping water.

"The aircraft will be dipping giant orange collapsible buckets slung underneath the helicopters into the Mohawk River, and then dropping the loads of water back into the river," a New York State Division of Military & Naval Affairs release stated.

This simulates a necessary skill for combating wildfires.

"Flying with almost three tons of water hanging beneath the helicopter is a skill which must be trained annually to maintain proficiency. Ground crews will also get practice in hooking up the buckets, which weigh 260 pounds empty," a release stated.

The training will be conducted from noon to 4 p.m. on Monday, April 15, and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the subsequent days.

[https://www.wktv.com/news/local/hear-helicopters-in-the-mohawk-valley-its-part-of-a-new-york-army-guard-training/article\\_9343839c-fb3b-11ee-8002-83977c23fc07.html](https://www.wktv.com/news/local/hear-helicopters-in-the-mohawk-valley-its-part-of-a-new-york-army-guard-training/article_9343839c-fb3b-11ee-8002-83977c23fc07.html)

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## **Bucket-bearing helicopter crews to drill on Mohawk River in Colonie**

**Times Union, April 15, 2024 ::**

COLONIE — New York Army National Guard crews will pilot a Black Hawk helicopter along the Mohawk River on Monday to practice filling the aerial water buckets to douse wildfires.

The 12-4 p.m. exercise will be based at Colonie Town Park on North Schermerhorn Road. Helicopter crews will skim the river's surface to fill Bambi Buckets with 660 gallons of water — with a weight of nearly 2.8 tons — and then drop the payload back into the river.

It simulates the state's Division of Military and Naval Affairs Office's efforts to fight outdoor fires.

The Division of Military and Naval Affairs said the exercise will happen from noon to 4 p.m. The helicopter crews will drill between the Twin Bridges in Niskayuna and Route 9 in Colonie. If necessary, additional sessions will be held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

The operation requires annual training for both the pilots and the ground crews that hook up the collapsible and orange, 260-pound buckets, the agency said.

Forest rangers from the state Department of Environmental Conservation also will take part. Rangers often direct helicopter crews to their fiery targets.

[Bucket-bearing helicopter crews to drill on Mohawk River in Colonie \(timesunion.com\)](#)

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## **NY Army National Guard trains to fight wildfires (video)**

**WTEN, April 15, 2024::**

COLONIE, N.Y. (NEWS10) — It's wildfire season, and New York remains at an elevated risk. The New York State Army National Guard is ensuring they are ready if a wildfire were to spark.

Helicopters were flying above the Mohawk River on Monday. Crews are practicing their skills picking up and flying with more than three tons of water.

To protect against wildfires, the state is currently under a burn ban that runs through May 14.

<https://www.news10.com/news/ny-news/ny-army-national-guard-trains-to-fight-wildfires/>

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## **New York Army National Guard conducts wildfire training drills along Mohawk River**

**WRGB, April 14, 2024::**

Starting Monday, you may see helicopters circling the area but there's no need to panic.

That's because the New York Army National Guard black hawk helicopter crews will be conducting wildfire training drills.

The drills be along the Mohawk River between the Twin Bridges and Route 9 starting Monday at noon and ending at 4 pm.

It will continue from 10 am to 4 as needed throughout the week ending on Thursday.

The aircraft will be dropping giant orange collapsible buckets into the Mohawk River, and then returning water the river.

This replicates the skills needed to fight a wildfire.

Rangers from the Department of Environmental Conservation Forest will also participate in the training as they are often responsible for guiding Army National Guard helicopter crews onto a fire target.

The last time New York Army National Guard helicopters were used to fight a fire was in August 2022 when a fire was burning at Minnewaska State Park Reserve near Ellenville.

That blaze involved 200 firefighters, some traveling from as far as Quebec, Canada. The fire, which eventually covered 270 acres, was ignited by a lightning strike on Aug. 26.

<https://cbs6albany.com/news/local/new-york-army-national-guard-conducts-wildfire-training-drills-along-mohawk-river>

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<https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/bucket-bearing-helicopter-crews-drill-mohawk-19403194.php>

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## **Black Hawk Helicopters In Action Over Capital Region This Week**

**WGNA, April 14, 2024 ::**

If you look up in the sky today in the Capital Region you may see a rare sight. Black hawk helicopters will be hovering over the area for a very important reason.

Why Will We See Black Hawk Helicopters In The Skies?

The New York Army National Guard's black hawk helicopter crews are gearing up for some wildfire training drills. You may see them swooping along the Mohawk River. They will be training primarily between the Twin Bridges and the area of Route 9. The training will start today (Monday, April 15th) at noon and run until 4 pm.

They plan to continue these wildfire drills through Thursday if needed.

### What Can We Expect To See?

The black hawk helicopter crews will be dropping enormous orange collapsible buckets into the Mohawk River. They will scoop up water from the river to mimic the real deal of battling wildfires.

Rangers from the Department of Environmental Conservation Forest will be conducting this training along with the New York Army National Guard. They are pros at guiding the Army National Guard helicopter crews straight to the center of the fires.

### This Isn't The First Time These Brave Rescuers Were Put To Work

Back in August 2022, they came to the rescue during a fire at Minnewaska State Park Reserve near Ellenville. It was a team effort with two hundred firefighters, some even coming from Quebec, Canada. The fire, sparked by lightning on Aug. 26, eventually spread across two hundred seventy acres of land.

If you catch a glimpse of those helicopters hovering and training over the Capital Region, just know they're gearing up to keep us safe. Practicing today to protect us tomorrow.

<https://wgna.com/black-hawk-helicopters-in-action-over-capital-region-this-week/>

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### **New York Army National Guard**

**Free state parks entries for veterans, Gold Star families expanded : Paralegal James Valk of Kinderhook has advanced to warrant officer in the New York Army National Guard**

**Times Union, April 14, 2024 ::**

ALBANY — Veterans and Gold Star Families members can be admitted free to the state's parks, lands, campgrounds and historic sites.

Gov. Kathy Hochul signed legislation to expand the state's Lifetime Liberty Pass Program and offer the free entry to for New York state veterans and Gold Star Families members. It is part of an effort to provide resources and support to veterans and their families.

"Our veterans have made endless sacrifices and New York is always looking for ways we can say thank you (veterans and military personnel) for keeping our country safe," Hochul said in a statement. "Nature heals and with the expansion of our Lifetime Liberty Pass Program, we're ensuring veterans and their families can easily visit our world-class destinations here in New York."

The Lifetime Liberty Pass Program will now be extended to include all veterans and certain Gold Star Family members who are residents of New York state. A disability rating is no longer required. The benefits include:

Free vehicle entry to State Parks and Department of Environmental Conservation-operated campgrounds and day use areas, as well as state boat launch sites, historic sites, arboretums, and park preserves

Free greens fees at State Park-operated golf courses

Free swimming pool entrance at pools operated by the state parks office

Discounted campsite and cabin rentals at State Parks- and Department of Environmental Conservation-operated campgrounds. The discount will be applied at the time of campground check-in.

Veterans can access these benefits by presenting a state Department of Motor Vehicles license or photo document with veteran status designation to employees at all staffed facilities. Veterans who do not have this designation on their ID can visit the DMV website for more information or apply for the free Lifetime Liberty Pass to ensure free entry.

New York State Gold Star parents, spouses or children can apply for the free Lifetime Liberty Pass.

The state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation oversees more than 250 parks, historic sites, recreational trails, golf courses, boat launches and other venues.

## Promotion

James Valk of Kinderhook was promoted to warrant officer in the New York Army National Guard during a ceremony at the New York National Guard headquarters in Latham.

Valk earned the promotion while serving as the chief paralegal for the New York Army National Guard at Joint Force Headquarters-New York in Latham. Lt. Col. David Berge, New York Army National Guard staff judge advocate, who presided over the ceremony, praised Valk during the ceremony.

"He has been a great asset to our legal team for years, and we appreciate all his hard work and knowledge he has as a part of our team," Berge said. Warrant officers are technical experts who fall between sergeants and commissioned officers in the Army's command structure.

Valk has served in the New York Army National Guard since 2011. He was assigned to the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade as a paralegal noncommissioned officer. In 2015, he was assigned to the 42d Infantry Division as the chief paralegal. He deployed to Kuwait in 2013 and 2014 as the paralegal for the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade.

He deployed again in 2020, and served as the command paralegal at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Additionally, Valk was appointed as the chief paralegal during the deployment, making him

the most senior paralegal in the area of operation, where he was the technical supervisor of 55 paralegals.

Valk is a graduate of the Army National Guard Battalion Career Counselor Course, Basic Leader Course, Paralegal Specialist Advanced Leader Course, Paralegal Specialist Senior Leader Course, Law for Paralegal Course, Command/Chief Paralegal Course, and Warrant Officer Candidate School. Valk has earned an Army Meritorious Service Medal, an Army Commendation Medal and an Army Achievement Medal.

The Saugerties native graduated from Hudson Valley Community College with an associate degree in criminal justice in 2008 and the University at Brockport with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice in 2010.

News of your troops and units can be sent to Times Union, Duty Calls, Terry Brown, Box 15000, Albany, NY 12212 or [brownt@timesunion.com](mailto:brownt@timesunion.com)

<https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/free-state-parks-entries-veterans-gold-star-19400573.php>

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## **Potsdam man promoted in New York Army National Guard**

**North Country Now, April 15, 2024 ::**

Christopher Sikkens, from Potsdam, and assigned to the Company B, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, received a promotion to the rank of staff sergeant in the New York Army National Guard on March 9.

Army National Guard promotions are based on a Soldier's overall performance, demonstrated leadership abilities, professionalism and future development potential.

These promotions recognize the best qualified Soldiers for a career in the New York Army National Guard.

For more information about the New York Army National Guard, visit [www.dmna.ny.gov](http://www.dmna.ny.gov) or [www.1800goguard.com](http://www.1800goguard.com)

<https://northcountrynow.com/stories/potsdam-man-promoted-in-new-york-army-national-guard,236124>

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## **Lamorte heads Guardâ€™s state marksmanship team**



## **The Altamont Enterprise, April 14, 2024 ::**

GUILDERLAND — New York Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Robert Lamorte II, a Guilderland resident, will head a four-man team set to compete in the Army National Guard's annual marksmanship competition in Arkansas, from April 29 to May 3.

"There is a lot of running and everything is done in full gear. You get to display your overall marksmanship skill as a soldier," said Lamorte, a member of the Joint Force Headquarters operations section.

Lamorte was invited to compete three times before but was not able to attend. This year will be his first year competing and leading the group as the team captain.

The Winston P. Wilson Marksmanship Competition, known as the WPW for short, is named after the Chief of the National Guard Bureau who established the national shooting event in 1971, according to a release from the New York Army National Guard..

"It not only tests your marksmanship, it tests your physical ability and your soldiering skills and ability to prepare your gear properly," said Lamorte in the release.

The rifle and pistol ranges on which the soldiers qualify replicate combat situations, Lamorte went on; the competitors are forced to adapt to the changing distances, multiple positions, and different appearances of targets.

"It's not just going out to the range being comfortable, sitting down and taking a nice calm shot."

The other team members are: Staff Sgt. Adam Crist, a Buffalo resident, assigned to the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment; Sgt. Craig Rowell, an Alden resident, assigned to the 152nd Engineer Support Company, 204th Engineer Battalion; and Staff Sgt. Warren Solomon, a Lewiston resident, assigned to the C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry.

Lamorte headed a team that finished in second place in the eastern states marksmanship competition at Fort Ethan Allen in Jericho, Vermont in August 2023. Lamorte also competed in the Army Guard's best machine gun crew competition in July 2022.

"You are wearing your full combat gear, your Kevlar, your load bearing gear, your battle belt, your water, your ammo and magazines. You are also dealing with the weather, which can affect everything from your weapons to visibility and stability," Lamorte said.

"If we win the WPW," he said, "we would be labeled as the best team in the country, and we could possibly be recruited to all guard team which competes internationally.

“When it comes to marksmanship community, everyone is cool with each other, everyone is looking to help,” Lamorte concluded. “You are competing against each other, but everyone is always willing to help, to share pointers. I have never met a greater group of soldiers than I have in these matches.”

— Melissa Hale-Spencer

<https://altamontenterprise.com/04142024/lamorte-heads-guards-state-marksmanship-team>

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## **East Greenbush resident retires from NY Army National Guard**

**Troy Record, April 16, 2024 ::**

LATHAM, N.Y. — New York Army National Guard Chief Warrant Officer 4 Larry Langley, an East Greenbush resident, was recognized for 29 years of military service during recent retirement ceremonies held at New York National Guard headquarters in Latham.

Langley, whose most recent assignment was as director of the New York National Guard Family Programs Office, and is a veteran of the Iraq War, received the Legion of Merit during the ceremony, said a press release announcing the recognition. Air National Guard Col. Michelle Buonome, the presiding officer at the ceremony and the New York National Guard's director of human resources, praised Langley for his service and commitment.

Langley, she said is, “passionate in helping people, always looking out for junior soldiers, generous, selfless, and solution-focused”

“The goals you have achieved are impressive and you have improved the organization, leaving it in a better place,” Bounome said in the release.

In his remarks, Langley thanked his family, his wife Heather, and the people he's worked with over the years for their support.

“It takes a team to get things accomplished,” he said in the release.

Langley enlisted in the Army Reserve as a military policeman in the 94th Military Police Company in 1995. While assigned to the Army Reserve he deployed to Bosnia as part of the peacekeeping efforts there in 2000, the release said.

In 2001, he transferred to the New York Army National Guard, and in 2002 he began a career as a full-time National Guard Soldier, working in the personal service branch.

In 2007 he deployed to Iraq with the 104th Military Police Battalion, where he was responsible for conducting operations at a forward operating base helicopter landing pad. He oversaw the movement of 23,000 personnel during this period.

In 2009, Langley became a warrant officer. In the Army, warrant officers are specialists in technical areas ranging from personnel management to maintenance.

Over the years he served in several different units in the personnel field and has played a key role in the New York National Guard Family Programs office, serving as deputy director of family programs, the release said. His awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the NATO Medal and the New York Medal for Merit.

Langley's retirement is effective on May 1, and he will continue to serve the New York National Guard as a civilian employee.

<https://www.troyrecord.com/2024/04/16/east-greenbush-residents-retires-from-ny-army-national-guard/>

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## **State police continue search for man missing out of Poughkeepsie**

**WTEN, April 16, 2024:**

POUGHKEEPSIE, N.Y. (NEWS10) — New York State Police are continuing their search for Nicolas Faust, 43, formerly of Marlborough and Peekskill, who was reported missing by his family. Faust was last seen by friends on March 24 around 2 a.m. near Mill Street in Poughkeepsie.

Police say Faust is approximately 5'9" tall, weighs about 175 pounds and has brown hair and brownish-hazel eyes. According to his family, Faust has multiple tattoos on his torso and arms, was reportedly last seen wearing cargo pants and a sweater, and is missing parts of his ring and pinky fingers on his right hand.

Faust's family also says that Nicolas is a sergeant in the National Guard. Anyone with information on his whereabouts or that has access to surveillance footage near Mill Street is asked to contact state police at (845)677-7300 and reference case number 11870801.

<https://www.news10.com/news/dutchess-county/state-police-continue-search-for-man-missing-out-of-poughkeepsie/>

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## **New York National Guard**

**New York increases security for Jewish community fearing Iran's attack on Israel**

**WRGB, April 14, 2024::**

With Passover just days away, the Jewish community is filled with fear as Iran announced a missile attack on Israel.

Governor Hochul said in a statement the New York State Police, National Guard, and the state Department of Homeland Security are already looking ahead to protect places of worship and high-profile locations.

State and local leaders say currently, there is no immediate or direct threat to the state.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams released a statement on X, formerly Twitter: "Our administration has also begun outreach to both Jewish leaders and elected officials across the five boroughs to keep them apprised of the situation.

Our intelligence and counterterrorism teams will continue to closely monitor the situation."

The Empire State has the largest Jewish population outside of Israel; the Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York says many in the Capital Region have friends and family overseas.

A spokesperson for the organization, Hank Greenberg says, "Our thoughts and prayers to friends, brothers and, sisters in Israel as they're absorbing the impact of a massive missile attack."

He says tonight's attack brings back similar memories from 1991 when Saddam Hussein and Iran attacked Israel.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, the highest-ranking Jewish member of Congress also took to social media to stand in solidarity with the Israeli community, "As Israel is under attack from Iran, we stand with Israel and its people, and the United States will do everything we can to support Israel's defense against Iran."

Greenberg traveled to Israel at the end of October for a mission trip with the United Jewish Federation of America and added he fears what will be left of the country.

"What I was watching on TV was a flashback to what I saw with my own eyes and heard with my own ears. I was in three air raids in two days and saw a missile blow up over me, that's what I'm watching on TV. So, I know what it's like and it's nothing short of terrifying."

We'll continue to follow this story as information becomes available, stick with CBS6 News for the latest.

For more information on the Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York, click here.

<https://cbs6albany.com/news/local/new-york-increases-security-for-jewish-community-fearing-irans-attack-on-israel>

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### **PFOA Issue**

**Jacobson applauds new EPA drinking water standards, says change will help Newburgh**

**Mid-Hudson News.com, April 14, 2024 ::**

NEWBURGH- Assemblyman Jonathan Jacobson (D, Newburgh) is applauding the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's decision to establish the first-ever national drinking water standard](#) to protect against exposure to per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Jacobson says this standard will help address PFAS levels that have impacted the quality of Newburgh's drinking water.

"As a resident of the City of Newburgh, which is unable to use its water supply due to high levels of PFOS and PFOA stemming from the firefighting foam used at Stewart Air Force Base and the Air National Guard Facility, the need for these new standards is not just theoretical, it is personal to me and my neighbors," said Jacobson.

PFAS chemicals, known as "forever chemicals" have been used since the 1940s and can be found in everything from nonstick cookware to firefighting foam. This category of chemicals is linked to cancer, organ damage, and disruptions to immunity and development in infants and children.

Following the detection of PFAS in Newburgh's local water source, it now receives its water from the Catskill Aqueduct, which also supplies New York City.

The EPA's new standards seek to protect an estimated 100 million people from PFAS pollution, preventing premature death and serious illness and reduce the limits of PFOA and PFOS to four parts per trillion. In New York State, the limit is currently 10 parts per trillion.

<https://midhudsonnews.com/2024/04/14/sunday-jacobson-applauds-new-epa-drinking-water-standards-says-they-will-help-newburgh/>

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### **Subway Mission**

**Opinion: KILGORE: New York City Can Solve Subway Crime Problem Without National Guard**

**The Daily Caller, April 15, 2024:**

On March 6, Democratic New York Governor Kathy Hochul announced that the state would be deploying hundreds of National Guard troops and state troopers into the New York

Subway system to address the city's growing crime problem. This came as a direct response to a string of recent random violent incidents, including a Subway operator reportedly being slashed in the neck in a late-night attack in Brooklyn.

The governor plans to send in 750 members of the National Guard, along with 250 from the State Police, part of a larger Subway Safety initiative that will cost the state approximately \$20 million. The new safety measures proposed also include paying for 10 teams of mental health workers, banning violent criminals from riding the subways, adding cameras to train conductor's booths and working with prosecutors to "track repeat offenders."

New York City has tried the tactic of increased police presence before. In 2021, subway crimes increased by 41%. In order to address the problem then, Hochul committed the state and the NYPD to over 1,000 overtime shifts, specifically on subway platforms and on trains. This tactic was successful but unsustainable. At the time, NYPD was 1,000 officers short based on its own headcount, and eventually, officers got called to other parts of the city. Unfortunately, NYPD still does not have the resources to devote thousands of officers underground. In the years since 2021, the police shortage has only exacerbated. As of July 2023, the number of vacancies within the NYPD had risen 22%.

Assuming the national climate towards police won't change any time soon, the likelihood of a surge of NYPD recruits, and the ability to increase police presence on subway platforms is not currently viable. But before looking to other uniformed law enforcement and calling in the National Guard, there are a number of easier (and cheaper) solutions that could quickly cut crime in the city.

First, add video cameras in subway stations. The slashing that happened in Brooklyn in February occurred when the conductor stuck his head out of the window. Law enforcement reviewed all of the available footage from the three cameras in the station, but none of those cameras were on the platform, and none inside of the train itself (including the conductor's cars). Some steps are being taken to remedy this, but it needs to be more widespread. Jose Ibarra, the man who allegedly murdered Laken Riley, was arrested one day after her death, thanks to the surveillance cameras on the University of Georgia's campus. New York has the technology, and the funds — they simply need to put it to good use.

Second, change the bail rules. According to the New York Police Department, 38 individuals responsible for assaulting transit workers were arrested 1,100 times. New York has gone back and forth with bail in the last five years. Currently, each crime is categorized as bail-eligible or not. Virtually all misdemeanors are not cash bail eligible, meaning a judge must release the person on their own personal recognizance, or with some conditions without sanctions.

Permitting judges to determine — on a case-by-case basis — whether a person should be detained prior to their trial is one way to legally protect a community. Many bail statutes require a judge to consider whether the individual is a danger to themselves or their community when setting a bail amount. For example, in New York, when cash bail for most misdemeanors and some non-violent felony charges was eliminated in 2019, crime rates continued to rise, causing the legislature to take another look at their bail statutes. Nothing in the statute requires the judge to consider current pending charges against the defendant, or their criminal history, both of which serve as prime indicators as to the individual's likelihood to re-offend.

Third, increase funding for police. In the fall of 2023, progressive groups called for major budget cuts in the NYPD, which ultimately could've brought the number of law enforcement to the level of sworn officers in the 1980s. Fortunately, Mayor Adams, a former police captain himself, reversed course and funded the NYPD. However, none of this funding goes to address the police department's staffing crisis, with over 2,500 officers leaving the department in 2023, citing hours and community support, including a dramatic increase (25%) in attacks against police officers.

While the presence of uniformed officers on the subway may temper crime for now, lasting change will only occur if the city accepts that the progressive proposals of 2020 have seriously damaged public safety and instead implements some of these substantial steps to reduce crime.

Maggie Cleary Kilgore is a visiting fellow at Independent Women's Law Center ([iwlc.org](http://iwlc.org)) and Deputy Commonwealth Attorney in Culpeper County, Virginia. She is former Special Counsel to Attorney General Jason Miyares and former Deputy Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security under the Youngkin administration.

<https://dailycaller.com/2024/04/15/kilgore-new-york-city-nyc-solve-subway-crime-problem-national-guard-kathy-hochul/>

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