



**TESTIMONY OF DRU RAI
NYS CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER AND DIRECTOR OF
NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES
JOINT LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARING ON EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL**

February 12, 2026

Good afternoon Chairs Krueger and Pretlow, Chairs Gonzalez and Otis, and a special thanks to each of you who have joined us today.

I am Dru Rai, New York State Chief Information Officer and the Director of the Office of Information Technology Services. It is a privilege to be with you.

Thanks to Governor Hochul's leadership and the support of both the Senate and Assembly, I am confident in saying that ITS is now the most impactful government IT organization in the country.

The ITS workforce provides 24/7/365 IT operations, engineering, and innovation to state agencies, entities and commissions, and numerous local governments.

We safeguard nearly 450,000 endpoints, 4,600 applications and billions of sensitive records from cyber threats and other risks.

At this time, we are shepherding dozens of major modernization projects that will speed up and transform the way New York State agencies deliver critical services.

This effort will allow us to secure our infrastructure, create more seamless interactions with the public, and leave the legacy technology we have relied on for decades.

As you will see, much of our current work falls into two buckets important to Governor Hochul, this Legislature, and nearly every New Yorker - - Affordability and Public Safety.

In the last 12 months, we have made extraordinary progress with our transition to the Dedicated Agency Service Model I spoke about last year.

We are more closely aligned with our client agencies, and in a better position to help them serve all New Yorkers.



This model pairs subject matter experts at the agencies with tech experts at ITS, empowers Deputy Commissioners of Technology and their teams to make real-time decisions, and ensures alignment to the State's technology strategy and mission.

Our Shared Services leads – including Chief Technology Officer, Chief AI Officer, and Chief Information Security Officer - - provide cost effective and consistent services to all New Yorkers.

Thanks to Governor Hochul and our partners inside and outside of government, the New York Security Operations Center (NYSOC) we built in 2022 is a national model for comprehensive, whole-of-state cybersecurity.

The NYSOC subscriber base continues to grow, and now includes 137 local governments, including the “Big 5” Cities, nearly every New York county, and numerous other cities, towns and villages. These entities receive endpoint detection alerting, SOC as a service, and attack surface management guidance.

The NYSOC now processes a whopping 350,000 security events per second, and ingests 400 terabytes of data every month. Earlier this year, we opened a third location, NYSOC-West, in Rochester.

In the three years since Governor Hochul launched the NYSOC, there isn't a corner of New York State that has not been made safer and more secure.

It seems as if everyone is talking about Artificial Intelligence, and so will I.

I believe the best way to assist our hardworking employees is to deliver AI education and training directly to them so they can build their skills and use AI responsibly.

Under the Governor's direction, ITS recently conducted a PILOT with a diverse group of volunteers from State agencies that span the health, human services, public safety, state operations and infrastructure sectors. Nearly 1,000 state workers participated.

This PILOT, which included an AI education course from non-profit Innovate US and the ITS-certified AI Pro tool, has provided us with valuable insights.

Building on the success of the PILOT, we have now begun to explore next steps for making AI education and training available to the larger New York State agency workforce.



This important initiative will allow state employees to safely hone their AI skills and unlock ideas about how AI can help their agencies problem solve and deliver for New York.

Like Governor Hochul, we are fully committed to making New York a national leader when it comes to the safe and transparent deployment of AI. In fact, ITS recently published the state's first-ever inventory of AI tools in use by state agencies, which is publicly available on New York's Open Data platform.

ITS is also leveraging technology to enhance the customer experience at state agencies - - including better mapping of user journeys, more useful and comprehensive analytics, as well as the creation of a dedicated, user-accessibility support team.

The recent launch of the New York State Design System is already speeding up development and delivering a more consistent user experience across all New York State agencies.

Last year, I appeared before you and called ITS an "agency on the rise."

As you can see, there is no shortage of important work to be done, including ongoing upgrades to the NY.Gov ID portal used by citizens, employees and businesses, to ensure the overall stability and reliability of this critical system.

Despite the uncertainty and fiscal challenges brought about by our federal government in Washington, we have made real progress in moving the Integrated Eligibility System program forward - - including launch of the new Child Support Online Enrollment tool and the first release of Fair Hearings, among other key milestones.

This progress is a direct result of the refined strategy and direction we set to break this program into smaller, iterative products to speed up delivery to our local social service districts and the people of New York.

And, we have addressed the state's asset inventory issues with new and stronger processes - - including a dedicated Asset Management team and regular reconciliation of assets.

Meanwhile, the new restricted technologies law will give ITS greater authority to prohibit agencies from purchasing technologies which pose a security risk.



Office of Information Technology Services

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

DRU RAI
Chief Information Officer

Since becoming CIO, we have prioritized talent enhancement at ITS - - aggressively recruiting, retaining and supporting technology leaders who are an asset to New York. In fact, we recently opened a 300-seat New York City hub to attract the City's top tech talent.

These resources have allowed us to be faster and more productive, and complete more of our work "in-house." We have made smart and targeted investments in both cloud and AI, and have negotiated a series of Enterprise service agreements that will save taxpayer money and ensure the maximum possible return on investment for New York.

In the meantime, we have focused on reducing incidents and downtime, and striving for operational excellence in all that we do.

Honorable members of the Legislature, I thank you for your input and partnership, and for your commitment to serving the people of New York.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have.