

Thursday, December 23, 2021  
To New York Community Banks

## FROM ICBA

### ICBA continues advocating extension of CBLR relief

ICBA said in a [national news release](#) that banking regulators' decision to resume a 9% Community Bank Leverage Ratio at the beginning of 2022 penalizes community banks for supporting local communities throughout the pandemic.

**ICBA Statement:** Responding to [interagency guidance](#) that indicates temporary relief from the 9% CBLR will expire on Dec. 31, ICBA President and CEO Rebeca Romero Rainey said reintroducing the 9% CBLR will harm community bank small-business lending in the middle of a global health crisis.

**Relief Efforts:** In its statement, ICBA:

- Continued its call for regulators [to extend](#) the 8.5% CBLR requirement and [permanently raise](#) audit and reporting requirement asset thresholds.
- Urged support for [legislation](#) introduced by Rep. Tracey Mann (R-Kan.) to allow regulators to implement a CBLR of 8-8.5% through 2024

**Joint Letter:** In a [separate letter](#) on Wednesday, ICBA and state community banking associations urged regulators to extend the temporary asset threshold relief measures issued during the pandemic, citing unprecedented deposit growth.

**Background:** This week's agency guidance said banks that elect the CBLR framework when submitting March 31 call reports will be subject to the 9% CBLR requirement.

### Deadline nears for 1071 comment letters

The deadline for ICBA's grassroots [comment letter campaign](#) on the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's 1071 data collection and reporting requirements is quickly approaching.

**Deadline:** Community bankers and small-business customers have until Thursday, Jan. 6, to use ICBA's [1071 resource center](#) to submit personalized comment letters.

**Submitting Comments:** Because the CFPB does not consider form letters, ICBA's [1071 resource center](#) offers a summary, guides, comment portals, and more to advocate needed reforms.

**Background:** [Dodd-Frank Section 1071](#) requires financial institutions to collect and report data on credit applications from certain small businesses, which would restrict access to credit, raise borrower privacy concerns, and require costly new third-party relationships.

### Existing-home sales, consumer confidence improve

**Existing-Home Sales:** Rose [1.9%](#) in November from October but remained down 2% from a year ago, according to the National Association of Realtors.

**Consumer Confidence:** Increased to [115.8](#) in December from 111.9 in November on a rising short-term outlook, the Conference Board said.

**GDP:** The Commerce Department increased its estimate of third-quarter gross domestic product growth from 2.1% to [2.3%](#).

## FROM OTHER SOURCES

- With U.S. cases, hospitalizations and deaths rising and health officials warning of a "tsunami" of new infections from the omicron variant that could overwhelm hospitals, the FDA authorized Paxlovid -- the first pill against COVID-19, a Pfizer drug Americans will be able to take at home to head off the worst effects of the virus. It was approved for adults and children 12 and older

with a positive COVID-19 test and early symptoms who face the highest risks of hospitalization. A Mayo Clinic spokesperson noted: “The efficacy is high, the side effects are low and it’s oral. It checks all the boxes. You’re looking at a 90% decreased risk of hospitalizations and deaths in a high-risk group – that’s stunning.” An antiviral [pill from Merck](#) is also expected to be authorized soon. [https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-pfizer-medication-f5f65e7e61d6aa9c7dfa193053e8878a?user\\_email=&utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=MorningWire\\_Dec23&utm\\_term=Morning%20Wire%20Subscribers](https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-pfizer-medication-f5f65e7e61d6aa9c7dfa193053e8878a?user_email=&utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=MorningWire_Dec23&utm_term=Morning%20Wire%20Subscribers)

- Omicron has fueled a record number of daily new cases -- infections in the U.S. rose to 154,000 daily cases on average over the past week -- but officials [reported](#) the wave of infections may have peaked. The past week's COVID spike in New York and D.C. is likely a preview of what will soon hit other parts of the country, per an Axios [report](#). The Northeast is seeing particularly large case increases. The [CDC says](#) Omicron now accounts for 73% of U.S. cases — a nearly sixfold increase in one week. More than 1,300 Americans are dying of COVID every day -- almost entirely from the Delta variant, as deaths lag several weeks behind infections.
- President Biden said the new Pfizer pill marks a “significant step forward in our path out of the pandemic” and said his administration will work with states to ensure equitable distribution. U.S. health experts agree vaccination remains the best way to protect against COVID-19, but with roughly 40 million still unvaccinated, effective drugs will be critical to blunting the current and future waves of infection. [https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-pfizer-medication-f5f65e7e61d6aa9c7dfa193053e8878a?user\\_email=&utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=MorningWire\\_Dec23&utm\\_term=Morning%20Wire%20Subscribers](https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-pfizer-medication-f5f65e7e61d6aa9c7dfa193053e8878a?user_email=&utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=MorningWire_Dec23&utm_term=Morning%20Wire%20Subscribers)
- Research teams in South Africa, Scotland and England reported Omicron infections seem to be milder, but hospitalizations are likely to increase simply because the variant is so contagious. It appears the lowered risk of hospitalization in all three countries is due in large part to immunity: Many of the infected already had protection against severe disease from previous infections or from vaccinations. More than [200 million Americans](#) — over 60% of the population — are fully vaccinated, the U.S. lags behind [other countries](#), some of which have inoculated over 80% of their populations, and only 63 million Americans have received boosters. [https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/22/health/covid-omicron-delta-hospitalizations.html?mkt\\_tok=ODUwLVRBQS01MTEAAAGBhnXq0OSFG3Lfi8FzBMaC9iDJXf3sim2BHDUXahkry8fb3yAsA\\_qcnmJgZMJROXtVkYdO1Vde-3\\_cbwUIGTwt-2goe2ejQncAXG0iBjJyyQnd](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/22/health/covid-omicron-delta-hospitalizations.html?mkt_tok=ODUwLVRBQS01MTEAAAGBhnXq0OSFG3Lfi8FzBMaC9iDJXf3sim2BHDUXahkry8fb3yAsA_qcnmJgZMJROXtVkYdO1Vde-3_cbwUIGTwt-2goe2ejQncAXG0iBjJyyQnd)

## FROM NEW YORK

- Governor Hochul today updated New Yorkers on the state's progress combating COVID-19. <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-updates-new-yorkers-states-progress-combating-covid-19-116>.
- New York state reported [29,000 new cases](#), a [new record](#) for the fifth time in a week. [17,000+](#) of the cases were in New York City, which appears to once again be the epicenter of the pandemic. Tuesday's figure was more than double that from a week ago. Governor Hochul warned: "This virus is going vertical. It’s going straight up." [https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:jXOGpIBJtTAJ:https://www.newsday.com/news/health/coronavirus/covid-19-long-island-news-omicron-1.50458898+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us...https://www.axios.com/newsletters/axios-am-f7ae065-47ee-4f4d-8614-7948291a3e83.html?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=newsletter\\_axiosam&stream=top](https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:jXOGpIBJtTAJ:https://www.newsday.com/news/health/coronavirus/covid-19-long-island-news-omicron-1.50458898+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us...https://www.axios.com/newsletters/axios-am-f7ae065-47ee-4f4d-8614-7948291a3e83.html?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_axiosam&stream=top)
- Governor Hochul said New Yorkers will soon be able to get tested for COVID-19 at subway stations or in their homes free of charge. The state has purchased 37 million at-home coronavirus tests New Yorkers will be able to order for free via a state web portal. About 5 million at-home

tests will be available by New Year's Eve, and the remainder will be distributed early next month. The tests are on top of those New York will receive from the free [500 million at-home tests that President Biden's administration will ship out](#) across the U.S. next month. The subway testing program will roll out Monday.

<https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:Eb51BNxB9OUJ:https://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/new-york-elections-government/ny-hochul-at-home-covid-tests-nyc-subway-sites-20211222-uohzgrhdnfdpjqfnp7ggweonm-story.html+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us>

- The omicron variant is showing resistance to two of the three monoclonal antibody treatments used to treat COVID patients. [Here's what we know about the current state of the virus and how New Yorkers can protect themselves from it](#). Meanwhile, New York is considering a booster shot mandate for health care workers, Gov. Hochul said, as the state fights a surge of COVID-19 cases driven by the highly contagious omicron variant, [The Buffalo News reports](#).

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**IBANYS will continue to provide updates as additional information becomes available. Thank you all for your continued participation and support.**

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