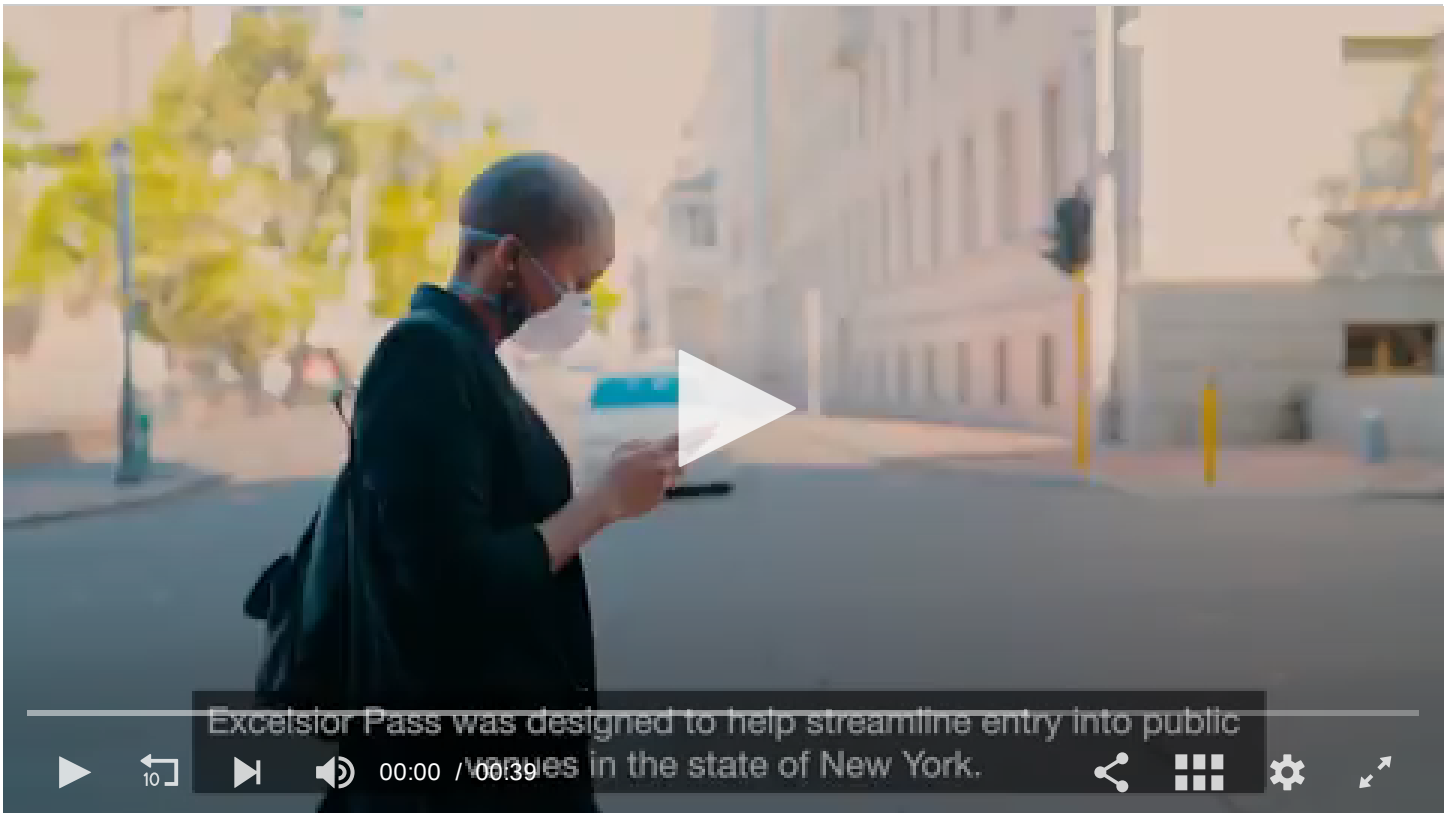**NEW YORK POST**

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NY's Hochul quietly scraps $64M Excelsior COVID vax app due to $200K monthly costs and fact no one uses it anymore

By Carl Campanile

July 3, 2023 | 3:13pm | Updated

Excelsior Pass was designed to help streamline entry into public venues in the state of New York.

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Gov. Kathy Hochul is quietly ending the state's COVID vaccine digital passport after spending an eye-watering $64 million over two years on an app that is no longer used by New Yorkers and costs $200,000 a month to maintain.

The Excelsior Pass Plus and the NYS Wallet App, launched in May 2021 by former Gov. Andrew Cuomo and stores proof of pandemic-era vaccinations for more than 11.5 million New Yorkers, will end on July 28.

The highly personal medical data will continue to be "private and secure," say state officials.
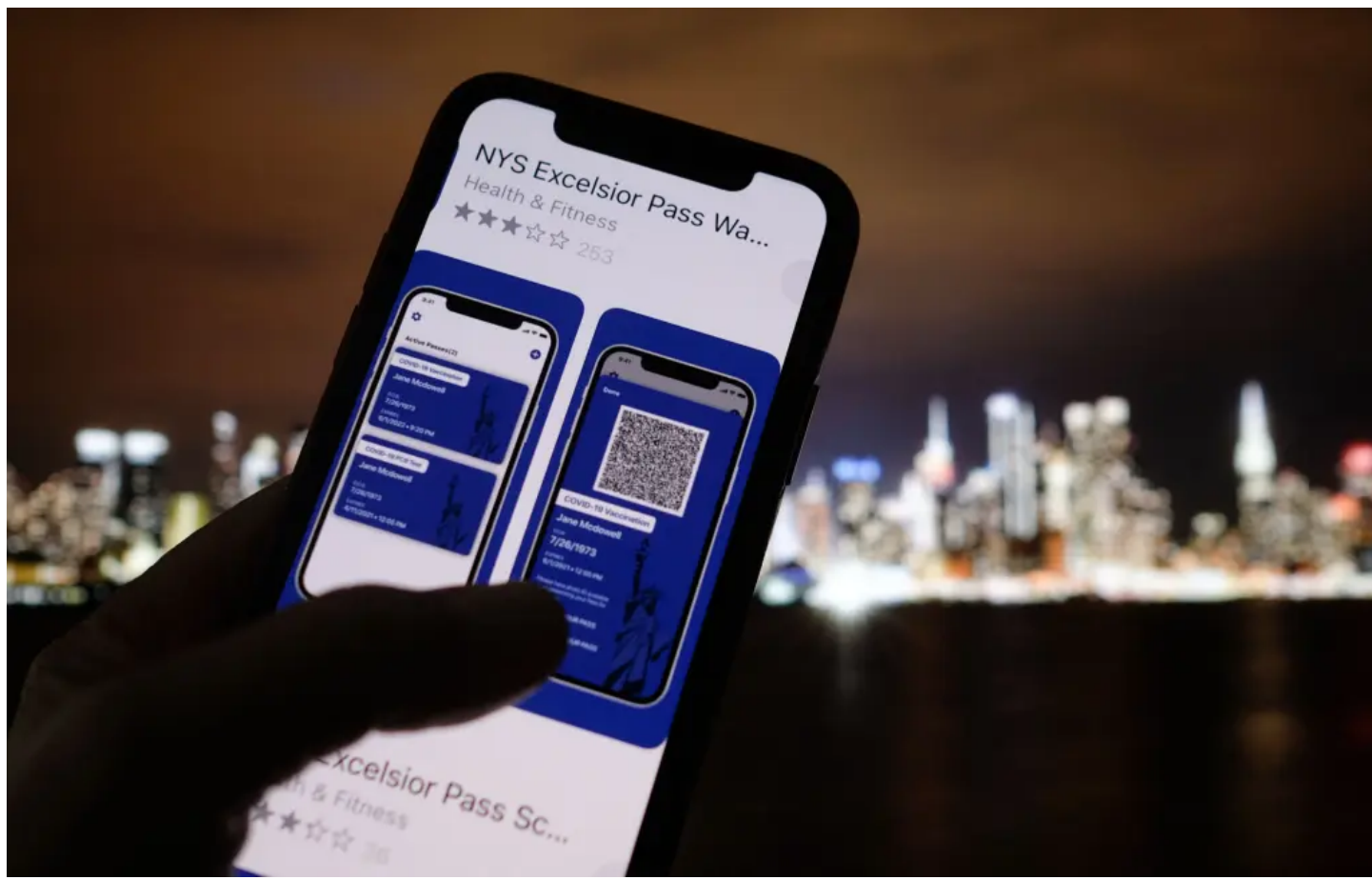
Hochul, in a statement through her press office Monday, acknowledged the Excelsior App was a relic — and junked it.

"Because demand for instant access to vaccine records has subsided and the public health emergency has ended, the Excelsior Pass app will be discontinued," said Hochul spokeswoman Maggie Halley.

The costs of the program exploded from $2.5 million to $17 million and then a sticker price of $64 million over two years in payments to consultants and contractors, according to a probe by the Times Union.

All consulting payments, including those made to Deloitte and the Boston Consulting Group, are now the subject of an investigation by state Inspector General Lucy Yang.

Even lawmakers said the Excelsior App was another example of wasteful government spending during the pandemic.

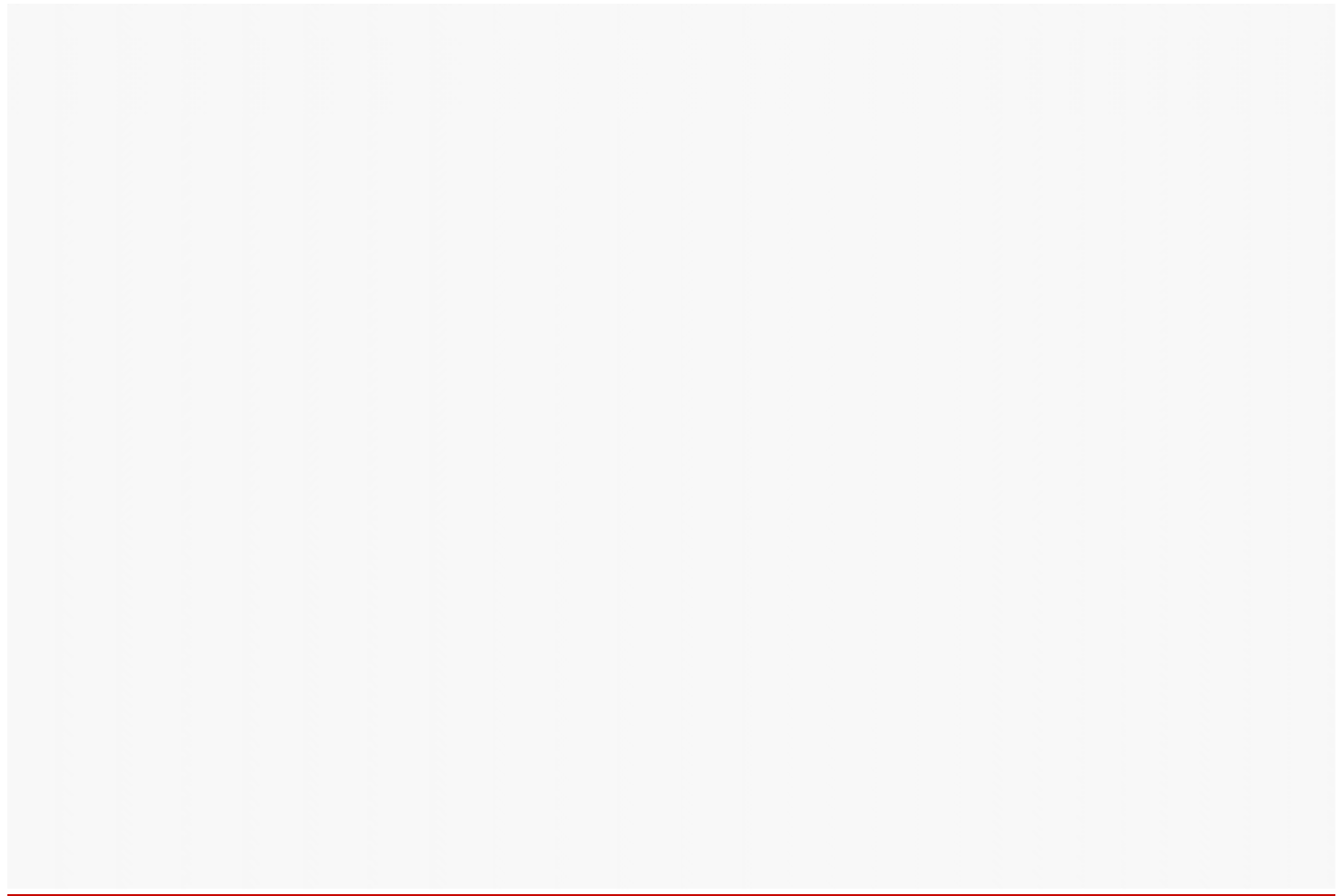New York spent an eyebrow-raising $64 million over two years on the Excelsior app.

AFP via Getty Images

"Good riddance to the Excelsior Pass. The sooner we stop spending money on it, the better. It didn't even sound good in theory," said Assemblyman Sam Pirozzolo (R-Staten Island).

"Why did we need an app? Everybody who got a shot got a vaccination card. I took a picture of my card."

Assemblyman Ron Kim (D-Queens), who didn't use the COVID passport app, said it's another example of taxpayers getting fleeced by government consultants.

"It was an emergency. We could have had freelance coders do this for free," said Kim.
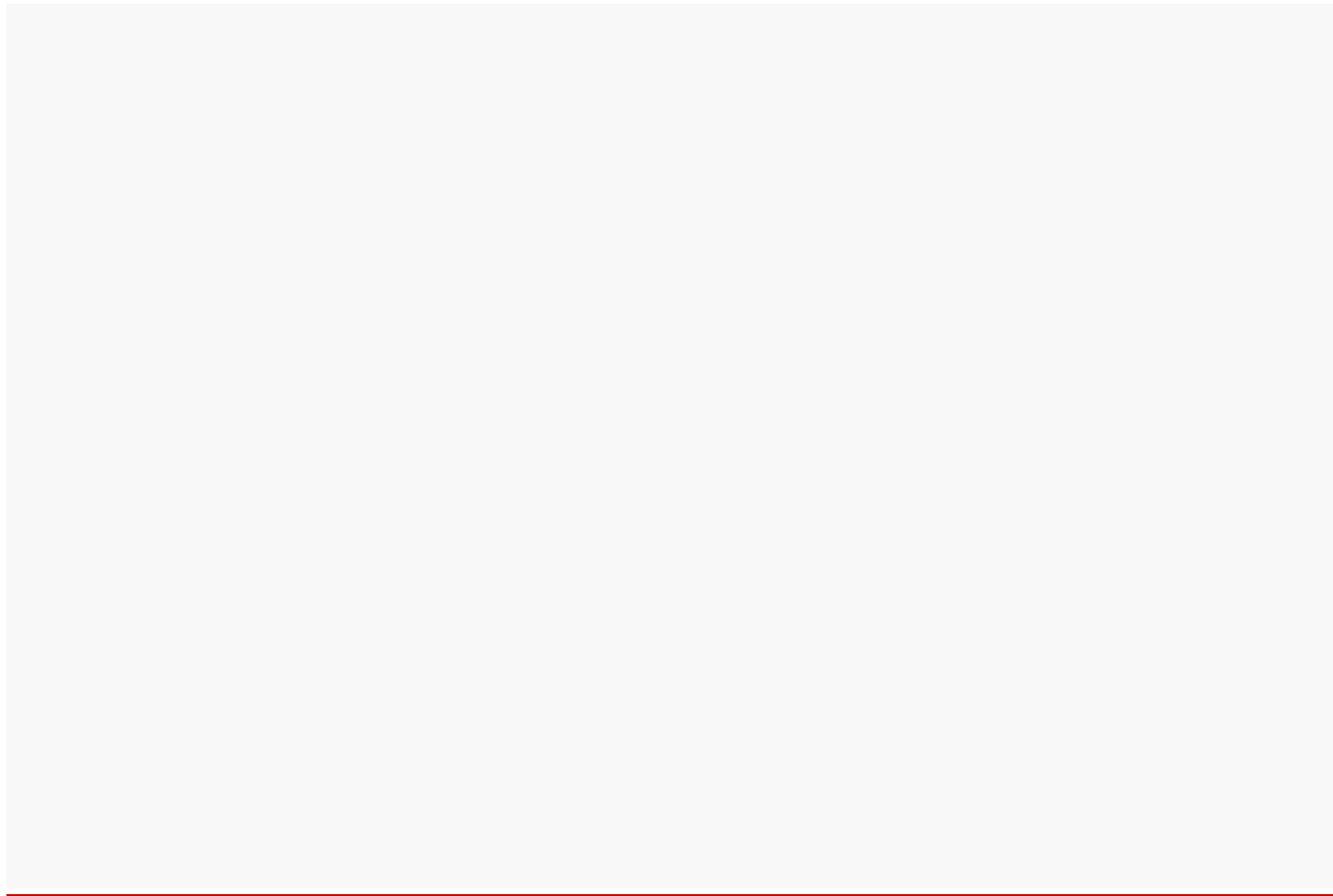
Gov. Kathy Hochul admitted that she's not salvaging the Excelsior App system for other purposes.
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"When we rely on third parties to do the government's job, we screw up."

While discontinuing the program, Hochul admitted that she's not even salvaging the Excelsior App system for other purposes.

"Over the past several months, the State has explored whether the technology infrastructure could be harnessed for additional purposes, but ultimately we determined that funds and resources associated with the technology will be better directed toward other projects," a rep for the governor said.

The Excelsior App was launched by former Gov. Andrew Cuomo in March 2021 to store 11.5 million New Yorkers' COVID-19 vaccination status.

AFP via Getty Images

"Going forward, the State will use knowledge gained from this project to improve how New Yorkers can use technology to access services and benefits."

23 **What do you think? Post a comment.**

If the app is still on your phone, it won't disappear at the end of the month and it should continue to show the latest vaccination info — but the question remains, for how long?

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