



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

## **The Ethics Reform Bill Passed By The State Senate Today**

Malcolm A. Smith

March 1, 2007

Senate Democratic Leader Malcolm A. Smith said the ethics reform bill passed by the State Senate today "contains many of the provisions Senate Minority have been trying for years to enact."

Smith noted that the Senate Minority Conference attempted in January to reform the rules of the Senate to make it more accountable and responsive to the people of New York. The proposals were rejected by the Majority.

In the three most recent Senate elections, The Senate Minority voiced a strong reform message and emerged victorious in districts that had been represented by the Majority.

Newly-elected State Senator Craig Johnson (D-Port Washington) who won a February 6 special election, said "One reason health care and property taxes have soared over the last decade is that our Legislature has been too dysfunctional to appropriately address the issue. This measure brings us closer to our goal of a

properly functioning State government, which for the people of New York will be a less expensive State government."

Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D-Yonkers) who defeated a 20 year Senate Majority incumbent in 2006, said the ethics reform bill "brings us closer to fulfilling the promise we made to voters to bring real change to Albany. Senate Democrats will continue the fight to make our State Government accountable and responsive to the people."

Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) a vocal proponent of reform who first came to Albany in 2004, said "this measure is a positive step towards a State Government that has the full faith and confidence of the people it represents." Valesky credited Governor Spitzer for "using his mandate to smash the status quo," and noted that the Governor set the tone for ethics reform shortly after taking office when he initiated changes in the regulations governing the Executive's office.

The bill passed by the Senate includes anti-nepotism provisions, today:

- Prohibits gifts from lobbyists and their clients of more than nominal value, including travel, lodging and other expenses, and broaden the types of lobbying activities that lobbyists must disclose;
  - Prohibits elected government officials and candidates for elected local, state or federal office from appearing in taxpayer-funded advertisements;
  - Closes the "revolving door" loophole by prohibiting former legislative employees from directly lobbying the Legislature for two years, and expands the revolving door restrictions for Executive Chamber employees to preclude appearances before any state agency;
  - Prohibits non-legislative employees from using their authority or influence to "compel or induce" any other employee to make political contributions;
  - Prohibits state employees from participating in any personnel decision or contracting matter concerning a relative.
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