



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

RULES REFORM COMMITTEE HOLDS 2nd HEARING IN ALBANY

DANIEL L. SQUADRON March 27, 2009

Today the bi-partisan Senate Rules and Administration Reform Committee held the second of four public hearings, at which they heard testimony from reform advocates and citizens for how the State Senate can improve the legislative process and become a transparent and accountable body. These hearings are key to the new Majority's effort to open up the legislative process, and increase public awareness and input. In the past, few public hearings were held on important Senate actions.

"Today we heard directly from many of the most active and vocal groups advocating for a change in the way the Legislature does business," said Committee co-Chair Senator Valesky. "While many of us have a good idea what course of action to take, the public input from these forums are critical and provide us with new ways of thinking on a number of topics. I look forward to working with Senator Bonacic and the other members as we discuss ways to give New Yorkers a Senate they can be proud of."

"Those who spoke at today's hearing made one thing clear: we need real change and reform in the State Legislature," said co-Chair Senator John Bonacic. "If the hearings are successful, they will produce real change. Among other things, real change means an open and deliberative committee process. Real change means equal staff allocations. Real change means that if the member item process continues, it must be fair to all the people of New York. Real change means disclosure of outside financial interests and open budget meetings.

We will not be successful unless we address these and other issues to bring real reform to the Senate. The hearings are helpful, but the proof will be in the results.”

At the conclusion of the hearings, the committee will craft a reform proposal to submit to the full Senate no later than April 13th.

Among those who testified today include the New York Public Interest Research Group, Citizens For A Better New York, the Empire Center For New York State Policy, New York Common Cause, New York State Committee on Open Government and Citizen Action of New York. All testimony collected can be found on the committees new website at <http://www.senate.state.ny.us/sws/reform/index.html>.

The next public hearing is slated for February 26th in New York City, followed in Brookhaven, Long Island on February 27th