



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

State Senator Liz Krueger Lauds Brennan Center for New Report on Legislative Reform

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New York—State Senator Liz Krueger commended the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law today, upon their release of *Unfinished Business: New York State Legislative Reform 2006 Update*.

"The Brennan Center understands the importance of reforming business-as-usual in Albany. It is my hope their work lights a fire underneath my colleagues in the Republican-controlled Senate, who continue to ignore the recommendations of the Center's 2004 report," Krueger said. "This report is titled 'Unfinished Business,' but we all know that business has barely even begun when it comes to having an open and transparent government in New York."

The Brennan Center's previous report, *The New York State Legislative Process: An Evaluation and Blueprint for Reform* was released in 2004. Despite the recommendations made at that time, few have been enacted.

The 2006 report notes that for the 2005 legislative session, after some of the Brennan Center's proposals were implemented, there were still no standing committee hearings on major legislation in either chamber; neither house voted down a single bill that received a vote on the floor; the use of conference committees to reconcile similar bills in each chamber remained the exceedingly rare exception rather than the rule; there was little floor debate on major legislation; and leadership continued to maintain near-total control over what legislation reached the chamber floor.

"The majority leader has complete control over what bills are brought to the Senate floor for debate and vote. As a result, very good, popular legislation that would pass under normal circumstances, never sees the light of day," Krueger explained.

Legislation that has been blocked by Majority Leader Joe Bruno include the four Super Bills documented in Environmental Advocates recently released Voters' Guide 2006. The Super Bills passed by wide margins in the Assembly, yet despite unprecedented bipartisan support, not a single Super Bill was brought to a floor vote in the Senate.

"Three-men-in-a-room sounds like a Greek opera, not the way the 11th largest economy in the world should be governed," she declared.

Senator Krueger first published her own 34 proposals for reform in 2002. "When I got to Albany, I was appalled by the antidemocratic, secretive practices I found, and knew the Senate needed change," she said. In 2005, Krueger joined her Senate Democratic colleagues in proposing changes to the rules based on the proposals in the first Brennan Report. Unfortunately, the Senate Republicans who control the chamber, all voted against these changes, ensuring their defeat.

"The Brennan Center has performed an incredible public service in continuing to fight for a more democratic and deliberative legislative process," Krueger concluded. "I am confident this report will help galvanize the reform movement, much as the 2004 report did, and it will illustrate to people that our work is nowhere near done."