



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo Urges Governor to Change Selection Process of Lt. Governor

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Utica, NY-Today, with the State Appeals Court listening to arguments about the legality of Richard Ravitch's appointment as New York's Lieutenant Governor, Senator Joseph A. Griffo (R,I,C – Rome) released a copy of the letter which he sent to Governor David A. Paterson last month, pressing the Governor to advocate for a more orderly process for an appointment of the Lieutenant Governor after a vacancy.

[text of Senator Griffo letter to Governor Paterson follows]

July 29, 2009

Governor David A. Paterson

Executive Chamber

State Capitol

Albany, NY 12224

As you know from your first-hand experiences in these tumultuous days, New York's archaic system for dealing with vacancies in statewide offices is a shambles. The most current crisis involves the vacant office of lieutenant governor.

The answer to the problem already exists, and I strongly urge you that as you work to reform the system, that you support and advance Senate Bill S.6067, which I introduced, to amend the state constitution and require that when the office of the lieutenant governor becomes vacant, the office be filled by appointment, subject to confirmation votes by the Senate and by the Assembly, each acting separately. My bill requires that the governor act within 30 days of the vacancy and that each branch of the Legislature also act within 30 days of the nomination, because it is essential that the Legislature have in place an official whose powers to break a deadlock in the Senate have been highlighted in the past few weeks.

My bill would enact a system identical to the one used under the U.S. Constitution to fill a vacancy in the office of the Vice-President. Requiring separate votes from each House of the Legislature, rather than a single vote in joint session, ensures that no single House has enough votes to confirm the nomination by itself.

This bill makes important, substantive changes that are essential. I also believe that your support of this bill would send an important symbolic message. At a time when we need to rally behind good ideas in a non-partisan fashion to encourage a new spirit of creativity and collaboration, your support for this piece of legislation would indicate to the people of New York that leadership can collaborate in the name of effective governance.

I strongly urge you to support Senate Bill S.6067 to put reform on the fast track, and demonstrate that cooperation is not just a word, but a way of doing business.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Griffo

Senator