



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Neil D. Breslin

Senator Breslin Requires Disclosure of Contributions to Legal Defense Funds

NEIL D. BRESLIN November 5, 2009

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SENATOR BRESLIN REQUIRES DISCLOSURE OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO LEGAL DEFENSE FUNDS

Requires Legislatures to Report any Special Contributions to the Legislative Ethics Commission

(Albany, NY)-Today, Senator Neil D. Breslin announced a bill that will help close a loophole in state ethics regulations that allows members of the legislature to create legal defense funds. Members of the legislature would be required to disclose any donations received to be used for legal defense funding to the Legislative Ethics Commission.

Currently, there is a loophole which allows for those in office to create legal defense funds. This allows supporters to make donations to help lawmakers with their personal legal bills. Although the Legislative Ethics Commission can approve the creation of a special defense fund outside the gift ban, the contribution amounts and contributors are kept secret from the public.

This bill would help close this loophole and require full disclosure. Donation amounts and donor identities would no longer be anonymous.

As Senator Breslin stated, “It is unethical to allow contributions to pay for any bills for an incident which results from a lawmaker’s private conduct, ridding this practice of its anonymity is the first step in addressing this situation.”

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