



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

Senator Valesky Lauds State Senate Passage of Landmark Ethics Reform Package

DAVID J. VALESKY January 21, 2010

| ISSUE: **ETHICS**

ALBANY, N.Y.—State Senator David J. Valesky applauded today’s Senate passage of sweeping ethics and campaign finance reform legislation.

“This legislation is a good first step toward putting an end to ineffective ethics rules and enforcement that have been pervasive in New York for decades,” Senator Valesky (D-Oneida), Vice President Pro-Tempore of the Senate, said. “By increasing transparency regarding legislators’ incomes and outside business relationships, strengthening oversight over possible conflicts, and committing to enforce violations, this legislation builds a much better system.”

The ethics reform package provides greater information regarding legislators’ outside sources of income, creates a body within the New York State Board of Elections to enforce greater adherence to campaign finance laws, requires greater disclosure from lobbyists and restores an independent lobbying commission. The package also fills an existing gap in state ethics law by explicitly outlawing the use of state resources for outside, for-profit business.

“The public has the right to know who legislators are doing business with, and if those relationships are with people who also do business with the state,” Senator Valesky said. “As public officials, we need to encourage transparency, not hide from it.”

The agreed-upon legislation also revamps current ethics law by creating the independent Legislative Office of Ethics Investigation to oversee legislative ethics, reinstating an independent state commission on lobbying and increasing disclosure requirements for lobbyists who have business relationships with public officials.

In addition, the Commission on Public Integrity would be replaced by a six-member board to oversee ethics compliance in the executive branch.

The push for ethics reform is the latest in a series of reform initiatives the Senate has adopted in the past year with Senator Valesky’s leadership, including empowering individual members through placing term limits on leadership and committee chairs, more equitable distribution of resources for all members, and

increased transparency through a new Senate website.