



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian X. Foley

## Senator Foley Helps Bring New Light to State Government

BRIAN X. FOLEY May 13, 2010

| ISSUE: **EDUCATION, HIGHER EDUCATION, GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

As part of the ongoing effort to establish greater transparency and responsibility in state entities, Senator Brian X. Foley (D – Blue Point) supported the passage of two bills (Senate Bills 5585-C and 7369) that make information about state education boards more readily accessible to the public.

One of the top priorities of Senator Foley is providing the public with an open look into the operations of state government and its entities so taxpayers know how their dollars are being spent.

For too long, there has been little transparency associated with the meetings of the Boards of Trustees at higher educational institutions in New York State. To remedy this, the first bill (S5585-C) deals with opening up meetings to public viewing by requiring that the Boards of Trustees at SUNY, CUNY and HESC make resolutions, actions, attendance and voting records available online no later than seven days after the meeting.

Many New Yorkers find it difficult, if not impossible, to understand the composition, purpose and legal responsibilities of state boards. The second bill (S7369) will bring New York in line with the majority of states, which provide a full compilation of the membership and meeting information of all state boards. Currently, only 35% of New York state boards post

public meeting notices and only 45% publicly post contact information.

“Bringing greater transparency to government has been one of my top priorities since my days as Supervisor of Brookhaven Town,” said Senator Foley. “Taxpayers have a right to know how their government operates and how the money they pay in taxes is being spent. This is especially important for the operations of our higher education institutions, which ensure the sustainability of our state through the education and development of our future leaders.”

These two pieces of legislation are only a portion of the legislation Senator Foley has supported to bring greater transparency to state government. Other examples include groundbreaking Public Authorities Reform, the Open Meetings law, and the Pension Reform (TRUST) Act.