



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Neil D. Breslin

Senate Democrats Seek To Hold GOP To Their Reform Promise

NEIL D. BRESLIN March 7, 2011

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(Albany, NY) After the Senate GOP continued to back away from their promise to support independent redistricting by quietly burying the centerpiece of Governor Cuomo's agenda to clean up Albany -- the Redistricting Reform Act of 2011 -- in the Senate Rules Committee where it can anonymously avoid public oversight, Senate Democrats today presented and delivered a petition seeking to force a vote and public hearing on the Governor's legislation.

Under Senate Rule VII, Section 4(e), one-third membership of any Senate Committee may petition and force a public hearing within two weeks on any legislation before that committee; to override the petition a full vote of the Committee must occur at the time of its' next meeting. All 11 Democratic members of the Senate Rules Committee signed today's petition, which was submitted to the 13 Republican members of the committee, all of whom signed the NY Uprising pledge to support independent redistricting last fall and ran for election as 'heroes of reform.'

Deputy Democratic Leader Neil Breslin (D-Delmar) said, "Convening a public hearing will allow those members who have voiced concern with the Governor's legislation the full

opportunity to discuss their issues in an open forum, instead of hiding behind an undemocratic legislative process. I invite all of my Republican colleagues on the Rules Committee who intend to keep their promise, to sign this petition and give the Governor's legislation the open and fair hearing voters deserve."

Republican members of the Senate Rules Committee include Senators: Jim Alesi, Kemp Hannon, Ken LaValle, Hugh Farley, Carl Marcellino, Owen Johnson, Steve Saland, George Maziarz, Bill Larkin, Michael Nozzolio, James Seward, Tom Libous and Dean Skelos.

Senator Mike Gianaris (D-Queens) said, "With each passing day, the Senate Republicans' cynical plan becomes further exposed. They all promised to support independent redistricting in order to get elected, then ran away from that promise at record speed because it no longer suited their partisan politics. It is Albany politics at its worst and it is shameful. It's time to Keep the Promise and Pass the Pledge."

Senator Gustavo Rivera (D-Bronx) said, "We shouldn't have to keep making excuses for Republican Senator Skelos' failure of leadership and failure to keep a campaign promise to his constituents and the people of New York. The rules are there to bring order, to pass legislation and make progress happen, not to block it. That's why I support this petition to bring a vote on Governor Cuomo's independent redistricting to the floor of the Senate."

Senator Daniel Squadron (D-Brooklyn/Manhattan) said, "54 out of 62 Senators signed Mayor Koch's pledge to support independent redistricting and other vital reforms. This initiative is too important to let die in a back room. 54 of 62 Senators must be given the opportunity to make good on their pledge."

Senator Adriano Espaillat (D-Manhattan/Bronx) said, "Voters elected us to reform Albany and fix the broken status quo that Senate Republicans seem hell bent on preserving. Instead of perpetuating the continuing dysfunction in Albany, Senate Republicans should put aside their political maneuvering and allow debate, sponsorship, and an up or down vote on Governor Cuomo's independent redistricting proposal. Most of the Senate Republicans joined their Democratic colleagues in supporting Ed Koch's pledge to pass independent redistricting, but now Republican support in the Senate appears to be more smoke and mirrors from a disingenuous Senate majority."

Senator Shirley L. Huntley (D-Jamaica) said, "The blatant disregard some New York State Senate members have for Ed Koch's New York Uprising Pledge is both disrespectful and dishonorable. Senate Republicans who signed the pledge and have continuously said that our state government must be reformed, have now suddenly become quiet, and unmoved, as the Senate Democrats have championed Ed Koch's mission, and the will of New Yorkers. Now is not the time to sit on the sidelines, as our great state comes through a myriad of fiscal and ethical challenges. We must ensure that New York State government is fair, effective, and transparent and once again be a leading example for other states in our union. Those who choose not to embrace this cause will have failed their constituents, their duties and responsibilities as an elected state official, and most of all the 19 million plus residents of the great state of New York."

** PETITION, AND LETTER FROM SENATOR BRESLIN
TO SENATOR LIBOUS ATTACHED **

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