



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Pension Abuse Reform Bill Moves Through Legislature

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO June 23, 2011

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Griffo-Sponsored Pension Abuse Reform Bill Wins Final Legislative Approval

(Albany) - State Senator Joseph A. Griffo (R-C-IP, Rome) today announced that the state Legislature has given final legislative approval to legislation that will increase the state Comptroller's Office's ability to be an effective watchdog for pension reform abuse.

Senator Griffo introduced the bill (Senate bill # 5460-A) at the request of the New York State Comptroller's office.

Griffo notes that the Retirement and Social Security Law places limits on the amount that may be earned by a retiree upon a return to public employment. "There's been more a directed focus statewide in the wake of the stories of municipal and public employees who have become 'double-dippers,' – those who earn a salary while also collecting retirement benefits from the Public Employees Retirement System," said Griffo. "The practice itself isn't illegal, but there are clearly cases of those who are milking the system for more money than they are allowed to earn."

"Abuse of the pension system by what is known as double-dipping should be curtailed," Griffo said. "The problem was that the curtain of bureaucratic red tape could not be parted

to allow the Comptroller's Office to check wage records to determine if state retirees are collecting their pensions and earning salaries above the maximum set by law. This legislation opens up the system to scrutiny, which will help the Comptroller's Office ferret out abuses of the system."

Griffo said that the bill is part of the efforts to rein in abuses in government. "Under the current system, there was no effective way the Comptroller's Office could access the records of all the local governments to see who was getting a public pension and a public paycheck," Griffo said. "Openness and transparency in government are essential to reforming the way government operates in New York State. I appreciate the support of legislators from both houses and both parties, as well as our State Comptroller, in securing passage of this important measure."

S.5460-A passed the State Assembly, where Assemblyman Peter Abbate (D-Dyker Heights, Bath Beach, Bensonhurst) sponsored the companion bill. The measure now goes to Governor Cuomo for his consideration.