



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Neil D. Breslin

## **Senator Breslin Announces Ethics Overhaul Signed Into Law**

Neil D. Breslin

August 17, 2011

(Albany, NY) After strong support from Senator Neil D Breslin (D-Delmar) to pass legislation earlier this year, the “Public Integrity Act of 2011” has been signed into law by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo. The ethics reforms are a great step forward in addressing Albany’s problems, as they shed light on the legislative process and will help bring integrity, accountability, transparency and public confidence back to State government.

“By changing the way Albany does business, the people’s business will get done,” said Senator Breslin. “For decades, the Capitol operated under a veil of secrecy that prevented the public from seeing who their representatives work for: constituents or special interests. These reforms will bring the process out into the light and allow New Yorkers to hold politicians accountable for their actions. I am pleased that the Legislature came together with Governor Cuomo to get the job done, and to bring honesty and integrity back to Albany.”

The ethics reforms will:

- Require comprehensive disclosure from state officials – including lawyers – regarding the outside clients & customers they provide services to;
- Eliminate “pay-to-play”;
- Strip public officials convicted of felonies involving public corruption of their taxpayer funded pension
- Require a more detailed disclosure of outside sources of income;
- Establish Project Sunlight, a database of all individuals and firms with matters before the state;
- Require disclosure from lobbyist and their clients of their relationships with public officials;
- And increase oversight of lobbying behavior through a broader definition of lobbying.

The Reform Act also establishes a new Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE), which will have investigative oversight over both the executive and legislative branches. Creating an independent oversight commission with greater enforcement authority will improve the standards of conduct and accountability for all elected officials.

Senator Breslin continued, “While this is just a first step, by passing comprehensive ethics reform we can tear down the walls of distrust and forge the path of public trust that leads New York toward a brighter future. Reform does not stop here, however, as the issue of campaign finance reform has yet to be addressed. Before Albany can consider itself truly an open and transparent government, we need to close the loopholes that allow politicians to personally benefit from the donations of hardworking New Yorkers.”

###