



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

Sen. Liz Krueger Calls on Senate GOP to Stop Blocking Law on ‘Ghost’ Campaign Funds

Liz Krueger

February 3, 2012

ISSUE:

- [Elections](#)

State Senator Liz Krueger (D-Manhattan) today called on the State Senate’s Republican majority to allow a floor vote on [S. 420](#), a bill that would require the timely disposition of so-called ‘ghost’ campaign funds amassed by former candidates who no longer hold elected office and are not running for reelection. In 2011, the bill was voted down on a party-line vote in the Senate’s Elections Committee, with Republican senators Thomas O’Mara, Greg Ball, Patrick Gallivan, Michael Nozzolio, and Michael Ranzenhofer voting against the measure.

According to a NYPIRG analysis [cited today](#) on YNN’s ‘State of Politics’, there are at least 43 ‘ghost committees’ haunting New York politics with a combined total of more than \$11 million in funds. These campaign committees belong to former lawmakers, some of whom are no longer even alive.

“Everyone knows our campaign finance laws need an overhaul,” said Sen. Liz Krueger. “But this issue is particularly obvious and the solution should be a matter of bipartisan agreement. Politicians shouldn’t be able to keep hundreds of thousands of dollars of campaign money hoarded years after their own careers end – it’s an invitation to corruption. NYPIRG and YNN have again brought attention to this holdover from Albany’s bad old days – if they’re serious about turning over a new leaf, Senate Republicans should let this bill come to the floor.”

This is a perennial story in New York politics, due to the state’s lax campaign finance laws and enforcement. About one year ago, in late January of 2011, the *Buffalo News*’ Bob McCarthy [wrote a column](#) on members of the “Retired Politicians With Lots of Leftover Money Club.” While former lawmakers are technically limited to using the funds for political purposes, the rules had been stretched past the breaking point. One colorful example from McCarthy’s column was former Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno’s use of campaign funds to buy a cover for the pool at his home. Roy Goodman, who Sen. Krueger replaced in the Senate ten years ago, still has over \$381,000 in his campaign account.

S. 420 would require that campaign funds be disposed of within four years of a candidate’s departure from elected office or the last election in which they ran. Funds could be disposed of by:

1. Returning funds pro rata to contributors;
2. Donating the funds to a 501(c)(3) designated charity organization;
3. Donating the funds to the State University of New York;
4. Donating the funds to the state's general funds;
5. Transferring the funds to a political party committee; or
6. Contributing the funds to a candidate or political committee within the current contribution limits.

#