



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo, Schimminger Bills Would Reform Lieutenant Governor Post

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO June 2, 2014

| ISSUE: **ELECTIONS, RULES, GENERAL, SPECIAL ELECTIONS, GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**



ALBANY – The lieutenant governor position has drawn increased attention and scrutiny in the past month in light of an upcoming change in personnel in November.

State Sen. Joseph A. Griffo and Assemblyman Robin Schimminger believe this is a perfect time for the Legislature to reconsider how the lieutenant governor is chosen and his or her role in the governing of New York. They sponsor three bills that would institute some common-sense reforms:

- [S2231/A2707](#): This bill would remove the constitutional provision that the lieutenant-governor shall act as governor whenever the governor is absent from the state.

- [S2234/A2713](#): This bill would provide a method for filling a vacancy in the office of lieutenant governor. The governor would nominate a new lieutenant governor within 30 days of the vacancy, and the Senate and Assembly would confirm or reject that individual through independent votes in each house. This would make state law identical to the federal Constitution.
- [S2403/A2052](#): This bill would change Election Law require that candidates for governor and lieutenant governor to run together as a slate in a primary election, as is currently required in a general election. Our present statute allows for the prospect of incompatible candidates being forced to run together and serving together in office.

“This is pretty simple: If you’re running for governor, you ought to be able to pick your running mate and run as a team,” said Griffo, R-Rome. “The governor needs a second-in-command he knows he can trust, and who can play a key role as a policy advisor, manager, and diplomatic liaison to those outside the Capitol. This is move toward preserving good governance, and avoiding chaos which could lead to dysfunction.”

“These bills would ensure that our state Constitution mirrors the federal Constitution, which has proven successful,” added Schimminger, D-C-I-Kenmore. “Harmony in our Executive Branch is essential to good leadership, which makes running this state and working across party lines a much easier feat, because the governor and lieutenant governor would share the same views.”

The legislators added that the stipulation that the governor can’t leave the state without ceding control is hopelessly outdated.

“In today’s technology-driven world, the Governor can stay connected to what’s happening in the state by just a click of a button,” said Schimminger. “There’s no longer a need to pass the baton to the Lieutenant Governor every time the Executive leaves town to visit another state or country.”

“With various technological advancements, it’s easier than ever for a governor to remain connected to the important business unfolding in Albany,” said Griffo. “His lieutenant governor will remain an important part of keeping government moving in the governor’s absence. But there’s no reason to believe the system will collapse just because the governor

may be visiting another state or another country.”