



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

Statement by Senator Tony Avella in Response to NY1 Report Highlighting Lack of Transparency in Public Relations and Strategic Communications Firms' Dealings with Government Officials

TONY AVELLA April 2, 2015

“As Chair of the Ethics Committee, I was shocked to learn that public relations and strategic communications firms are not subject to the same registration and disclosure requirements as lobbyists. The fact of the matter is that these firms are meeting with government officials, all the while advocating their outside clients’ interests. Whether these firms are directly making requests of elected officials or not, they are in a position to broker agreements, expedite client meetings, and influence decision-makers.

While I have already supported legislation that would separate the activity of lobbyists and political consultants, we must not ignore the questions raised by PR and communications activities, as well. It is high time that we review the law regulating these activities and I am committed to developing legislation that would require disclosure for all firms that have substantial contact with both elected officials and outside clients. As we work to repair public trust in our elected officials, we must no longer tolerate lobbyists in consultants’ clothing.”