



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Senate passes bill to close 'Agents of the City' exemptions

TERRENCE MURPHY June 16, 2016

| ISSUE: **ETHICS REFORM, LOBBYING, FOIL, BILL DE BLASIO, CORRUPTION**

ALBANY, NY - Non-contractual advisers to politicians will be subject to Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests thanks to ethics reform legislation sponsored by Senator Terrence Murphy which passed the Senate today. The legislation would close the exemption used by Mayor Bill de Blasio to deem five such individuals "agents of the city" who are shielded from disclosure and limit potential conflicts of interest.

"I have said it before, I don't trust Mayor Bill de Blasio and his tricks to hide critical information through this loophole from the public," Senator Murphy said. "The public has a right to know who is influencing decisions and if they have any conflicts that would simultaneously violate the public's trust. Its high time we regain the public's trust by putting it above self-interest or personal interests."

Some feel that the first part of law may not even be necessary. Robert Freeman, the executive director of the New York State Committee on Open Government, told the New York Law Journal he'd never heard of the "agent of the city" exemption prior to this month and that the Mayor's claim was inconsistent with judicial decisions.

"I think it's ridiculous," Freeman said. "In my opinion, 'agents of the city' goes far beyond the intent of FOIL, the language of the law and common sense."

The legislation, Senate Bill S8014, would specifically state who is subject to the inter and intra agency exception provided by FOIL. Agents of the city, who have no contract with state and municipal entities, would not be exempt.

Several of Mayor de Blasio's "advisers" are also lobbyists and political consultants who represent clients with pending business before City Hall and are major donors to the Mayor's campaign and non-profits, which are currently the subject of six separate criminal probes. The second part of the bill would outlaw such practices and curtail the ability of private contractors with state and local agencies from being authorized to appear before those same agencies on behalf of a private client.

The bill passed unanimously. It will head to the State Assembly where it could be passed as part of an agreement on ethics reform.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2015-S8014

- Introduced

- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Relates to contracts involving state agencies

June 03, 2016

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Terrence Murphy

Do you support this bill?