



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## Independent Democratic Conference members receive leadership posts on influential committees

JEFFREY D. KLEIN January 10, 2017

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**Albany, NY** — Members of the Independent Democratic Conference gained top Senate committee leadership roles when they were handed up on Tuesday including appointments on Labor, Banks, Consumer Affairs, Children and Families, Health, Finance and Codes.

The influential chairmanships and vice chairmanships provide venues for IDC members to oversee important policy and legislative matters.

“As our conference grows, I’m proud that Independent Democratic Conference all of our members will continue to lead the way by serving on key Senate committees where they will shape policy and legislation that matters to all New Yorkers. I congratulate my members on their new positions and their deep dedication to this state,” **said Majority Coalition and IDC Leader Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester).**

Newly-minted **Senator Marisol Alcantara (D-Manhattan)** will serve as the State Senate’s Labor Chairwoman. She brings with her a breadth of knowledge on labor issues. She served as a union organizer for SEIU 32BJ and, most recently, as an organizer for the New York State’s Nurses Association. She received a Master’s degree in Labor relations from the CUNY Murphy Institute of Labor. A daughter of transit workers, she is a member of the Steel

Workers union.

The Senate's Labor Committee will have the opportunity to discuss the IDC's "No Worker Left Behind" policy which seeks to enhance wages beyond \$15 for direct care workers and protect car wash workers from exploitation by making them eligible for the minimum wage. Also key in the IDC's Changing NY Agenda, the "Made by New Yorkers," proposal, which aims to bring manufacturing back to the state, generate jobs and brand products made in the state will be discussed in this committee.

"As a longtime labor organizer and activist, I understand both the enduring achievements of the labor movement and the importance of strong labor laws that ensure justice and humanity in the workplace. Most of our lives are spent at work, and New Yorkers deserve to be treated fairly and with respect by their employers. As such, I take the chairwomanship of the Labor Committee as a solemn responsibility to which I will bring strong values forged over a lifetime of working within the labor movement," **said Senator Alcantara.**

**Senator Jesse Hamilton (D-Brooklyn)** will serve as the State Senate's Chairman on Banks. An attorney, he worked for the City's Department of Finance for 28 years.

"I previously worked as the ranking member of the Senate's Committee on Banks and I'm proud to take the reigns this session. We have a lot of issues to examine like the exploitation of the elderly in the reverse mortgage industry and on M/WBEs. I'm ready to roll up my sleeves and get to work," **said Senator Hamilton.**

**IDC Deputy Leader David Valesky (D-Syracuse)** will continue to serve as the Vice Chairman of the Health Committee. Senator Valesky has worked as the Vice Chair on Health for two years.

“From making sure policy keeps New Yorkers healthy to ensuring the wellness of our hospitals, our health care institutions and everyone employed in the health care industry, I’m proud to serve once again as the Senate’s Health Committee Vice Chair. We will not let another Hoosick Falls happen again, and this year I will focus on protecting our public drinking water,” **said Senator Valesky.**

In his role, Senator Valesky will push legislation to adopt the EPA’s list of unregulated contaminants into state law, giving small communities the resources to test their water supplies for these dangerous substances. He will also call for a strategic water safety fund to drive a study and long term plan to ensure a safe water supply for all New Yorkers. These investments include identifying technologies to improve monitoring of public water supplies, identifying new revenue streams to invest in statewide water handling infrastructure and other recommendations to prevent further crises.

**Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland)** will serve as the Chairman of Consumer Protection.

“Making sure that consumers are protected is critical for economic success. As Chair of the Consumer Protection Committee, I will fight to crackdown and eliminate scam artists and also promote best practices to help businesses grow and thrive,” **said Senator Carlucci.**

As Chair of Consumer Protection, Senator Carlucci will work on the IDC’s Utility Consumer Advocate proposal. This advocate would would operate independently and provide a meaningful voice for consumers who currently have no voice in the rate-setting process.

**Senator Diane Savino (D-SI/Brooklyn)** will serve as Vice Chairwoman of both the Finance and the Code Committees. She’s previously served as the head of the Labor and Bank committees. The Finance Committee will have the opportunity to examine the IDC’s “College Affordability for All” proposal, which aims to expand Tuition Assistance Awards to more

middle-class students across the state, regardless of immigration status.

“Both the Finance and the Codes committees are vital in the State Senate, and I’m honored to serve as vice chairwoman of each of these distinguished groups and continue fighting for the issues most important to New Yorkers,” **said Senator Savino.**

**Senator Tony Avella (D-Queens)** will serve as the Chairman of the Children and Families Committee. He previously served as its chair in the 2015-16 session.

“I have dedicated my life to protecting working and middle-class New Yorkers and I look forward to continuing that effort as the Chairman of the Children and Families Committee. I am happy to continue in this role and look forward to ensuring the safety and well-being of New York’s families in that capacity,” **said Senator Avella.**

The Children and Families Committee will address important issues such as raising the age of criminal responsibility for 16- and 17-year-olds, an issue where New York trails behind 48 other states. In addition, the committee will work on expanding afterschool programs, providing children and adolescents in a safe environment to grow academically and stay off the streets, as well as expanding the child care tax credit.

As a leader of the Senate, **IDC Leader Klein** is considered an ex officio member of every committee.

The IDC also handed up conference leadership roles for this year’s legislative session:

- Senator Klein will serve as IDC Leader,

- Senator Valesky will serve as IDC Deputy Leader for Legislative Operations,
- Senator Carlucci will serve as IDC Whip,
- Senator Savino will serve as IDC Liaison to the Executive Branch; and
- Senator Avella will serve as IDC Assistant Conference Leader for Policy and Administration.