



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael H. Ranzenhofer

## State Senate Passes Pension Forfeiture Reform

SENATOR MICHAEL H. RANZENHOFER February 1, 2017

| ISSUE: **PENSION FORFEITURE**, **ETHICS REFORM**, **CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM**



**Albany, NY** – The New York State Senate has passed legislation (S418) to amend the New York State Constitution to strip taxpayer-funded pensions from convicted politicians.

State Senator Michael H. Ranzenhofer, a co-sponsor of the bill, voted in favor of it.

“Under existing law, some public officers are still able to collect a pension even after they are found guilty of a serious crime, and I have been working to end this practice. This reform measure will help to ensure that corrupt government officials face serious financial consequences for their misconduct,” said Ranzenhofer.

Under the measure, a pension may be reduced or revoked if a public officer is convicted of a felony related to their official duties. Public officers include elected officials, direct gubernatorial appointees, municipal managers, department heads, chief fiscal officers and policy-makers.

“If state officials fail to be ethical and uphold the public’s trust, then they should be held accountable for their actions. This historic new Constitutional Amendment does just that,” said Ranzenhofer. “I am pleased to report that it is a step closer to reality.”

In order to amend the State Constitution, the legislation must pass both houses of the Legislature in two consecutive sessions. Both the Senate and Assembly passed the measure during the 2015-16 Legislative Session. Following its passage in both houses earlier this week, it will be presented to voters for approval later this year on Election Day.

A law enacted in 2011, known as the Public Integrity Reform Act, subjected any public official that joined the retirement system on or after November 13, 2011 to pension forfeiture if convicted of certain felonies related to their public office. However, the new law could not apply to public officials who joined the retirement system before that date because of language contained in the State Constitution. The Constitution states that public pensions involve a contractual relationship that cannot be reduced, unless an amendment is made to the document.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### 2017-S418

- 
- 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
- 

Provides for the reduction or revocation of the public pension of a public officer

January 03, 2017

In Senate Committee **Judiciary**

Sponsored by **Thomas D. Croci**

Do you support this bill?