



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Rich Funke

On the Importance of being Earnest... About Bill Drafting

SENATOR RICH FUNKE March 27, 2019

| ISSUE: **LEGISLATION**

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On the importance of being earnest....about bill drafting

Dear Neighbor-

In this addition of the insider, I've decided to take on an exciting topic-bill drafting! Don't all h

We get no shortage of good ideas for bills from constituents and sometimes I even think of a g
bill to make it a reality that gets tricky. A mistake in the section of law you amend, the langua
between the bill text and the memo can all spell trouble.

Let's start at the beginning. I have a great idea for a bill-what do I do? I usually go over it with
forward staff takes the idea to work on the text. My staff will either put together a full draft c
non-partisan Legislative Bill Drafting Commission. What is that you ask? Well, it's a bi-partisa
help Legislators draft bills properly. They are supposed to take your text or outline and check
sections of law include all the proper definitions and make certain the bill is organized approp
Legislative Bill Draft. You review it and make changes until you are happy. Next, a memorand
provides a justification. This is all submitted to Senate revisions where it is formally introduc

Sounds simple and easy right? Not so much. Even with all of that work and reviews, bills still
matter. One example happened a couple of weeks ago. A member from Long Island had a bill
to provide notice of hearings on utility rate increases to residents on their bill. Sounds like a g
amended the Public Service Law. That section of law DOES NOT impact the Long Island Pow
Public Authorities Law. The member was given a heads up as it were and pulled the bill to am

Remember the memorandum attached to the bill that, I mentioned? That can be problematic
member had a bill to require interpreters for various languages be available at every state age
but even more so when I read the attached memorandum that also said it was applicable to c
discussion on the bill in Committee.

One thing I have figured out since I've been in the Senate is that when it comes to drafting law
at the Legislative Bill Drafting Commission as well as my Legislative staff do an excellent job
with operational and workable. They are the unsung heroes of state government. Next Time-

