

.....PRESS RELEASE.....

New York State Legislature

**RICHARD L. BRODSKY**

Chairman,
Corporations, Authorities and Commissions
422 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12248
(518) 455-5753

BILL PERKINS

Chairman
Corporations, Authorities and Commission
817 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247
(518) 455-2441

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For Information Contact:

Chris Valens at (845) 820-1807
Cordell Cleare at (646) 326-6601

Brodsky, Perkins, and Advocates Urge Governor to Sign Long-Awaited Authorities Reform Bill

Senator Bill Perkins (D-Harlem) and Assemblyman Richard Brodsky (D-Westchester) joined reform advocates to urge Governor Paterson to sign an authorities reform package passed by both houses of the legislature. An authority is a public agency that operates with minimal oversight. The legislation would impose transparency and accountability. The Governor threatened a veto.

“Authorities such as the MTA, ESDC, LIPA, the Thruway Authority and hundreds of others have been vehicles for stupendous increases in state debt, corruption, scandal, and mismanagement,” said Assemblyman Brodsky, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions. “They are a shadow government. Our legislation brings them back to legitimate organizations in service of the public interest.”

The legislation contains common sense fixes for the many problems plaguing authorities including the creation of an independent authority budget office with investigatory power and the requirement that agency business be conducted in a financially responsible way. The bill has been widely hailed as the most thorough reform of state government in decades, and is supported

by people such as Gene Russianoff, president of the Straphanger's Campaign which advocates improvements in the way MTA operates. Mayor Bloomberg is pressuring the Governor to veto.

"New York's authorities have operated in secret, mismanaged public resources and awarded sweetheart deals to developers and others long enough," said Senator Perkins, Chair of the Senate Committee on Corporations, Authorities, and Commissions. "Governor Paterson needs to step up and sign on behalf of the people. Let the billionaires fend for themselves this time. These reforms are the result of years of hard work and thorough analysis by the experts in the field."

Senator Perkins was referring to the fact that many of the bill's principles are the result of a commission on authority reform that was headed by Ira Millstein, a leading expert on corporate governance.

Senator Perkins agrees with Assemblyman Brodsky, who said, "We are committed to working together to ensure that real reform takes place in Albany. That won't happen if the Governor vetoes this bill."

Senator Perkins and Assemblyman Brodsky are considering a series of public meetings and hearings as well as a coordinated release of info about authority practices. They plan on releasing a major statement on authority debt in a few days.

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