



JOSÉ M. SERRANO
29th Senate District

LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK



SANDY GALEF
95th Assembly District

May 14, 2013

Hon. Andrew Cuomo
Office of the Governor
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

We thank you for your tireless work in helping to reform our government and developing policies to help eradicate corruption. As you continue to develop a comprehensive legislative ethics package, we urge you to consider reforming the State's antiquated laws for allocating member items.

While member items have not been included in the state budget since you took office, in the event member item funds are restored in future budgets, we must put into place an effective policy that will help inspire public confidence in our government. In the past, a majority of members have used their member item money for worthy causes, such as funding homeless shelters or senior citizen meals program. However, there are always a few members who choose to fund personal projects for their own benefit which has cast a negative light on the entire state government. We need to establish a system that prevents these sorts of abuses and provides greater oversight, accountability, and transparency in the distribution process.

In 2010, we collaborated to introduce legislation (S920/A641), co-sponsored by a diverse group of members on both sides of the aisle, that addresses the problems plaguing the member item system. The provisions in the bill will ensure funds are being used for legitimate purposes, eliminate conflicts of interest, equalize funding levels for all districts throughout the State, and harness the expertise of State agencies. New Yorkers have called for government reform in many different areas, and this legislation provides a commonsense approach to this issue by adding layers of scrutiny and transparency to a process that has traditionally been shrouded in mystery.

It is our hope that you will join in support of these reforms and help to implement a policy that will benefit our state for years after you leave office. We thank you for your consideration, and offer our support and assistance in the implementation of our proposal.

Sincerely,

José M. Serrano
29th Senate District

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