

NEW YORK
STATE
SENATE
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247



May 14, 2025

The Honorable Thomas P. DiNapoli
New York State Comptroller
Office of the New York State Comptroller
110 State Street
Albany, NY 12236

Dear Comptroller DiNapoli,

We write to express our strong opposition to the \$10 million appropriation included in the 2025-26 State Operations Budget Bill, which would allow taxpayer funds to be used for payment or reimbursement of attorneys' fees and related expenses for state employees involved in federal investigations unrelated to their official duties.

This proposed use of public money is a gross misuse of taxpayer dollars. It undermines public trust in government and sends a troubling message that elected officials and state employees are entitled to a publicly-funded legal defense, even for matters entirely disconnected from their public responsibilities.

While the language of the appropriation appears to be crafted to benefit one specific elected official, its scope is so broad that it could extend to nearly any state employee, past, present, or future - regardless of the nature of the investigation or their role in government.

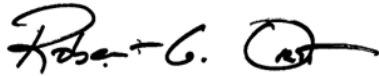
The appropriation's language opens the door to ongoing, unchecked public spending on private legal matters that have no connection to state employment. Such an arrangement is not only offensive to the principles of public accountability but may also raise serious constitutional concerns.

The appropriation explicitly states: *"Attorneys' fees and expenses shall be paid by the State to the employee or the employee's private counsel from time to time during the pendency of the Process and **upon the audit and warrant of the Comptroller.**"*

We urge you, in the strongest terms, to refuse to warrant any payments under this appropriation. Upholding the integrity of our state government and the responsible use of taxpayer dollars demands no less. As someone once said, no one is above the law.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Robert G. Ort
Senate Minority Leader
62nd District



Senator Andrew Lanza
24th District



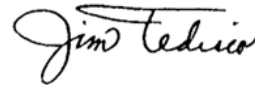
Senator Pam Helming
54th District



Senator Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick
9th District



Senator Rob Rolison
9th District



Senator Jim Tedisco
44th District



Senator Daniel G. Stec
45th District



Senator Alexis Weik
8th District



Senator Peter Oberacker
51st District



Senator Steve Chan
17th District



Senator Steve Rhoads
5th District



Senator Dean Murray
3rd District



Senator Mark Walczyk
49th District



Senator George Borrello
57th District



Senator Mario Mattera
2nd District



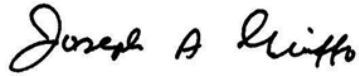
Senator Patrick Gallivan
60th District



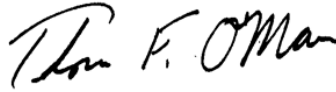
Senator Jack M. Martins
7th District



Senator Jake Ashby
43rd District



Senator Joseph Griffo
53rd District



Senator Tom O'Mara
58th District



Senator Anthony Palumbo
1st District



Senator William Weber
38th District