



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

NEW YORK STATE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ETHICS



**SENATOR
ALESSANDRA BIAGGI**
CHAIR



NEW YORK STATE SENATE
ALBANY, NY 12247

ALESSANDRA BIAGGI
SENATOR

December 17, 2021

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Temporary President and Majority Leader
New York State Senate
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Senator Stewart-Cousins:

I am pleased to transmit the Annual Report of the Senate's Standing Committee on Ethics and Internal Governance for the 2021 Legislative Session. As Chair, I am proud to continue to lead our efforts to address important matters under my committee's jurisdiction.

During the 2021 session, this committee met virtually five times and reported fourteen bills. The Committee also held two hearings on New York's system of ethics oversight and enforcement.

I want to thank my colleagues who served on the Committee for their efforts this year, as well as the Majority Conference for their continued support of the committee's operations.

With Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'A' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

New York State Senator Alessandra Biaggi
District 34

2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

NEW YORK STATE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ETHICS AND INTERNAL GOVERNANCE

Senator Biaggi, Chairperson

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Senator Neil D. Breslin	Senator Anthony H. Palumbo
Senator Todd Kaminsky	Senator Phil Boyle
Senator Toby Ann Stavisky	Senator Andrew J. Lanza

COMMITTEE STAFF

Committee Counsel: Kenan Kurt
Legislative Director : Karen Reppy

COMMITTEE JURISDICTION AND OVERVIEW

The New York State Senate Standing Committee on Ethics and Internal Governance has legislative oversight responsibilities for issues concerning internal workplace ethics, per diem and travel expenses, and time and attendance.

During the 2021 Legislative Session, 31 bills were referred to the Committee for its review. Of these bills, 14 were reported from the Committee. Four were passed by the Senate, although none passed both houses. This work was conducted through a series of five committee meetings. A list of all bills reported from the committee is provided at the end of this report.

In addition to its regular meetings, the Committee held two hearings on New York's system of ethics oversight and enforcement.

COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

During the 2021 Session with the utilization of virtual committee meetings, the Ethics and Internal Governance Committee met a total of five times and held two in person hearings. The committee reported several notable pieces of legislation that went on to pass on the Senate floor.

The committee passed two bills to address legal compensation and campaign reimbursements. S164, by Senator Gianaris prohibits state reimbursement of campaign and political committees or legal defense funds, for payments made on behalf of the criminal defense of a state employee. S1542A, by Senator Kaminsky, prohibits certain persons from receiving compensation for legal fees, consulting, or other work performed for an industrial development agency or an economic assistance corporation.

The committee also advanced S6398, by Senator Biaggi, to raise the lobbying threshold to \$10,000 and make it easier for non-profit and other community organizations to participate in advocacy work without compromising the needed transparency that New York's lobbying regulations and reporting system provide.

In light of the many ethical lapses of the former Governor this year, the committee turned its attention to the Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) and its structural failures. The Committee reported S6262, by Senator Biaggi, which aims to update JCOPE member appointments by removing the partisan advantages built into the appointment process; S5254A, by Senator Biaggi, which removes the partisan voting requirement that allows appointees of a particular party or branch of government to protect that party or branch of government from investigation or findings by the committee; and S6261, by Senator Biaggi, which makes it easier to appoint an Executive Director by allowing a simple majority of JCOPE members to vote in favor of appointing or removing an Executive Director. These bills passed the Senate Majority as part of an Omnibus Reform bill S6964A, by Senator Biaggi. Additionally, the Committee reported S1059A, by Senator John Liu which requires that JCOPE develop anti-sexual harassment training for registered lobbyists, and prohibits lobbyists who fail to complete the training from engaging in state lobbying.

TWO HOUSE BILLS

In 2021, none of the 31 bills referred to the Standing Committee on Ethics and Internal Governance passed both houses of the Legislature.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

Bill	Sponsor	Summary	Significant Action
S164	Gianaris	Prohibits state reimbursement of campaign and political committees, legal defense fund for payments made on behalf of the criminal defense of a state employee	Passed Senate
S202	Kaplan	Relates to the term “reportable business relationship” as it relates to certain employees of the state university of New York and the city university of New York	Reported from Committee
S816	Biaggi	Prohibits campaign contributions to candidates for state senate and assembly by certain members of the legislative ethics commission	Reported from Committee
S1059A	Liu	Authorizes the joint commission on public integrity to provide a training course concerning anti-sexual harassment training for lobbyists and requiring lobbyists to complete the course annually	Passed Senate
S1500	Breslin	Requires legislators and candidates for member of the legislature to provide a link to their financial disclosure statements on their official state and campaign websites	Reported from Committee
S1543A	Kaminsky	Prohibits certain persons from receiving compensation for legal fees, consulting, or other work performed for an industrial development agency or an economic assistance corporation	Passed Senate
S2550	Rivera	Prohibits lobbyists who are convicted of or plead guilty to class D felonies or higher level crimes from acting as a lobbyist for a period of three years	Reported from Committee
S3430B	Comrie	Requires public officers and bodies to provide interpreters and assistive listening devices for the hearing impaired at public hearings under certain conditions	Reported from Committee
S5254A	Biaggi	Relates to the joint commission on public ethics	Reported from Committee

Bill	Sponsor	Summary	Significant Action
S5540	Sanders	Prohibits state officers and employees from official involvement with a state project where the officer or employee acted as a consultant on such project	Reported from Committee
S6261	Biaggi	Modifies the composition of the voting majority upon the appointment and removal of the executive director of the joint commission on public ethics	Reported from Committee
S6262	Biaggi	Provides for filling of vacancies on the joint commission on public ethics	Reported from Committee
S6263	Biaggi	Modifies the requirements for financial disclosures for certain state and legislative officials, officers and employees	Reported from Committee
S6398	Biaggi	Relates to reporting requirements on small nonprofits	Reported from Committee
S6964A	Biaggi	Relates to the joint commission on public ethics	Passed Senate



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