

For Immediate Release,
Tuesday, March 31, 2015

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Good Government Groups Question Why Ethics Disclosure Bill Not Yet Publicly Disclosed

A New York State ethics deal may have been reached, but no one has yet seen a bill. Only 15 hours remain before the deadline of the state budget's required passage is reached.

It is unacceptable in a functioning democracy that an ethics bill about the disclosure of legislators' outside income hasn't even been disclosed to the public. Yet it will be introduced in a moment's notice, fast-tracked with a message of necessity, and the legislature will vote on a major reform bill with no one having a chance to review it let alone read it.

Over the past few years, too many important bills on major issues have been handled using this short-circuited and nontransparent process. There has not been one public hearing on how to handle legislators' outside income yet a law will be introduced and passed within hours addressing the issue.

Press releases and news accounts should not be considered reasonable substitutes for the legislative process. Without bill language we can't assess the true value of these reforms, but we can be sure we don't like the way our state government is functioning.