



2015's Year of Corruption in Albany Wraps Without Major Reforms to State Government

Legislature, Governor Do Nothing About Historic Arrest of Two Legislative Leaders.

Still Time for a Special Session to Reduce Corruption

Governor Cuomo says that we must all “advocate the ideal, live in the real.” Unfortunately, in the “real” that New Yorkers live in, our state government is doing very little to better itself and is dismissing or ignoring essential reforms as unrealistic or naïve.

Despite the torrent of publicity and public outrage surrounding the corruption arrests of the leaders of the state senate and state assembly, the legislature and governor enacted none of the major reforms needed to reduce the flood of money and influence-buying that has made Albany synonymous with corrupt state government.

But it is not just money and Pay to Play that has given Albany a bad name. As of 5pm on the last night of the session, legislators had still not seen the actual language for the giant package of important bills they would be voting on just a few hours later.

This Albany tradition is so customary and expected, that it even has a name: the “Big Ugly.” It’s not Schoolhouse Rock, it’s the governor wheeling and dealing in secret with legislative leaders, bills passed with no committee hearings, no public input, no public review of bill language and a hurried last-minute vote on the largest and most important policy legislation of the year.

We support the call by major civic groups for a special legislative session to address the massive corruption problems revealed by the arrest of the legislative leaders and adopt much needed reforms. In particular, we call on the legislature and governor to:

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1. Close the LLC Loophole
2. Restrict contributions from businesses and individuals that do business with the state or benefit from government subsidies. (Pay to Play reform)
3. Significantly raise the compensation of state legislators.
4. Create a strong and independent ethics enforcement agency.
5. Create an NYC-style campaign finance system with small donor matching.

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