

BRENNAN CENTER
FOR JUSTICE
at New York University School of Law



For immediate release:
Friday, June 26, 2015

For more information:
Larry Norden, Brennan Center, (646) 463-1579
Dick Dadey, Citizens Union, (917) 709-2896
Susan Lerner, Common Cause, 917-670-5670
Barbara Bartoletti, League of Women Voters NY, 518 469-8905
Blair Horner, NYPIRG, 518 727-4506
John Kaehny, Reinvent Albany, (917) 941-9865

NEWS RELEASE

CIVICS DECRY ALBANY'S UNFINISHED ETHICS AGENDA URGE GOVERNOR, LEGISLATIVE LEADERS, TO CONVENE SPECIAL SESSION

(Albany, NY) New York's leading civic organizations today decried Albany's continuing failure to fully address the ceaseless ethics problems head-on during the 2015 legislative session. The groups called on Governor Cuomo and the state's legislative leaders to convene a special session to tackle ethics reforms before the end of the calendar year.

The groups characterized the reforms contained in the state's budget agreement, which came before the indictment of yet another of the state's legislative leaders, as "inadequate" to solve the massive scandals that have plagued the Capitol. The groups described the failure to enact any other needed changes as "indefensible" and "shockingly irresponsible" and urged a return of the governor and lawmakers to the state Capitol to tackle additional reforms.

The groups specifically called for:

1. strengthening the state ethics watchdogs to bolster their independence and public accountability;
2. considering limits on lawmakers' outside employment;
3. appointment of an independent executive and legislative compensation commission; and
4. closing the LLC loophole created by the Board of Elections, and other critical campaign finance reforms.

Any ethics agreement is only as good as the agencies charged with its enforcement. New York's ethics enforcement entities—JCOPE and the Legislative Ethics Commission—require substantial improvement.

New Yorkers deserved a serious response before the end of session in this year of unending corruption scandals. Inaction and deflection in the face of the continuing ethics scandals is unacceptable. New York's political leadership must strengthen regulation, oversight and the enforcement of the state's ethics laws. New Yorkers across the state are demanding no less.

###