



December 5, 2016

Governor Cuomo  
Executive Chamber  
Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Assemblymember Heastie  
Speaker  
Legislative Office Building  
Albany, NY 12248

Senator Flanagan  
Majority Leader  
Legislative Office Building  
Albany, NY 12247

Senator Klein  
Senate Co-Leader  
Legislative Office Building  
Albany, NY 12247

**Re: Please strengthen independent oversight of economic development contracts and include Clean Contracting reforms as part of any special session**

Dear Messrs. Cuomo, Flanagan, Heastie, and Klein:

We write today to ask that any special session of the legislature include fundamental changes to how the state awards and oversees over a billion dollars a year in economic development contracts. The public has not forgotten that in September key state officials were arrested for rigging over \$780 million in economic development contracts.

Specifically, we urge you to strengthen independent oversight of state spending, which under the state constitution is the job of the Comptroller.

We suggest the following fundamental reforms to protect the public’s money and restore public trust in government.

## **Five Clean Contracting Reforms Proposed by Watchdog Groups:**

1. Require competitive and transparent contracting for the award of state funds by all state agencies, authorities, and affiliates. Use existing agency procurement guidelines as a uniform minimum standard.
2. Transfer responsibility for awarding all economic development awards to the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC), and end awards by state non-profits and SUNY.
3. Empower the comptroller to review and approve all state contracts over \$250k.
4. Prohibit state authorities, state corporations, and state non-profits from doing business with their board members.
5. Create a 'Database of Deals' that allows the public to see the total value of all forms of subsidies awarded to a business – as six states have done.

We also urge you to reduce the potential for conflicts of interest by exploring options to limit campaign contributions from anyone who has or is seeking a state contract. Nineteen states and NYC have “pay to play” laws, New York State does not.

Thank you,

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League of Women Voters – NYS  
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