



Reinvent Albany Calls for Comptroller to Review All State Contracts, Say Governor’s Remarks About Prosecutors Providing Independent Oversight Over State Contracting Is “Absurd.”

The watchdog group Reinvent Albany says Governor Andrew Cuomo's assertion that prosecutors provide adequate independent oversight over state contracting is absurd.

“The governor might as well be saying there is no need for police, because there are district attorneys. But everybody knows that the police—and the Comptroller—are there to prevent crime and ensure rules are followed. D.A.’s are only called on after crimes are committed. D.A.’s are no substitute for the independent oversight that the state constitution assigns to the Comptroller.” Said, John Kaehny, Executive Director of Reinvent Albany.

U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara’s investigation into state economic development programs has revealed widespread pay to play and systemic problems that result in part from the fact that the Comptroller was stripped of the authority to review billions in economic development contracts awarded by SUNY and SUNY affiliated non-profit groups.

Citizens Union, the Citizen Budget Commission, Common Cause NY the Fiscal Policy Institute, the League of Women Voters, Reinvent Albany, and NYPIRG have previously proposed 5 Clean Contracting Reforms including:

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 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.