



**For immediate release:**  
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## ***NEWS RELEASE***

### **YEAR OF “ALBANY ON TRIAL” STARTS WITH FORMER TOP AIDE TO GOVERNOR CUOMO AND BIG POLITICAL DONORS FACING BRIBERY AND EXTORTION CHARGES**

#### **GROUPS CALL FOR STRONG ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES AS FEDS SHINE HARSH SPOTLIGHT ON ALBANY’S PAY TO PLAY CULTURE**

A series of major government corruption trials begin today with former executive deputy secretary to Governor Cuomo, Joseph Percoco and top political contributors to the governor facing bribery and extortion charges. The case alleges that Percoco received more than \$300,000 worth of bribes from companies that had business before the state<sup>1</sup>. Charges include conspiracy to commit extortion and solicitation of bribes and gratuities.

This is the first of six trials that will play out during this year’s legislative session. In response to the corruption risks revealed by the trials, government watchdog groups have called on the Governor and Legislature to finally act on major reforms that would increase the transparency and oversight of state contracting, business subsidies and reduce the risk of corruption by restricting campaign contributions from people doing business with the state and strengthening government oversight agencies.

The groups have also called for closing the “LLC Loophole” which allows for essentially unlimited contributions through Limited Liability Companies and full transparency for discretionary “lump sum” spending, which the groups say are much bigger, more secretive and a greater corruption risk than member items.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/politics/albany/2017/12/21/andrew-cuomos-loyal-aide-trial-what-you-should-know/966733001/>

# RESTORE PUBLIC TRUST

	<p><b>Clean Contracting.</b> Strict new accountability measures that would result in an open, ethical, and efficient way to award government contracts appropriations, an area which was identified as a key problem in the indictments of the governor’s top aides.</p>
	<p><b>Real Budget Transparency.</b> Make lump-sum budget appropriations and the resulting expenditures fully transparent.</p>
	<p><b>Ban “Pay to Play.”</b> Strict “pay to play” restrictions on state vendors. The U.S. Attorney’s charges that \$800m in state contracts were rigged to benefit campaign contributors to the governor underscores the need to strictly limit contributions from those seeking state contracts.</p>
	<p><b>Close “LLC Loophole.”</b> Ban unlimited campaign contributions via Limited Liability Companies. LLCs have been at the heart of some of Albany’s largest scandals.</p>
	<p><b>Strict Limits on Outside Income.</b> Real limits on the outside income for legislators and the executive branch. Moonlighting by top legislative leaders and top members of the executive branch has triggered indictments by the federal prosecutors.</p>
	<p><b>Effective Watchdogs.</b> Truly independent, effective, well-resourced, ethics enforcement agencies are needed (<i>e.g.</i> JCOPE, SBOE, ABO)</p>