



Reinvent Albany Evaluates Ethics Proposals in Executive Budget

Supports 7 of 10 Proposals and Recommends Amendments; Opposes 3

Governor's Proposals Do Not Tackle Systemic JCOPE Problems

Reinvent Albany today released a [detailed analysis](#) of 10 ethics measures proposed by Governor Cuomo in his [Executive Budget Good Government and Ethics bill](#). Governor Cuomo has said he will not complete a budget without addressing ethics.

We undertook this analysis to help the public and stakeholders understand what the Governor is proposing and offer our perspective as a watchdog group. We generally support 7 of the Governor's 10 ethics measures. Of the seven, Reinvent Albany supports four with suggested amendments, and supports three only if they are substantially amended. We oppose three others.

Reinvent Albany's top priorities for the budget are:

- 1) Codifying the agreement reached between the Governor and Comptroller DiNapoli restoring the Comptroller's authority to pre-audit contracts before they are executed;
- 2) Establishing a Database of Deals revealing all business subsidies received from the state by companies and jobs produced in return; and
- 3) Establishing a public financing system of elections akin to New York City's.

Governor's Ethics bills

While we generally support seven of the governor's recommendations, we do not believe they address the core of Albany's problems with pay to play and conflicts of interest. [We believe any substantial reform of ethics laws should overhaul the Joint Commission on Public Ethics \(JCOPE\)](#) including the composition of the board and appointing

www.reinventalbany.org

OPEN, ACCOUNTABLE, EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT
148 Lafayette, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10013

authorities, changing the voting procedures to majority rule, and increasing transparency on the adjudication of complaints.

We note that lobbying in New York State is already more regulated and requires more disclosure than other states. Ethics reform must include more than lobbying regulation.

Most of the Governor's proposals increase regulation of lobbyists, including: banning individual lobbyists from offering political consulting services; requiring lobbyists disclose fundraising activities and campaign contributions to elected officials; banning loans by lobbyists to candidates and certain political committees; increasing penalties for violations of the lobbying laws; lowering thresholds for reporting lobbying activity and business relationships; and requiring lobbyists to follow a Code of Conduct.

Below is a chart summarizing Reinvent Albany's positions. Summaries of each proposal and an explanation of our position and recommended amendments are in the [full analysis](#).

Part of Good Government and Ethics Bill	Name of the Proposal in the Good Government and Ethics Bill	<u>Reinvent Albany Position</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strongly Support 2. Support And Recommend Improvements 3. Support <u>Only</u> with Amendments 4. Oppose
Part A	Disclosure of Tax Returns by Candidates for Public Office	Support <u>Only</u> With Amendments
Part M	Lobbyist Loans to Candidates	Support And Recommend Improvements
Part O	Lobbyist Disclosure of Campaign Contributions	Support And Recommend Improvements
Part P	Ban Political Consultants from Lobbying Certain Elected Officials	Support <u>Only</u> With Amendments
Part Q	Disclosure Requirements for Certain Nonprofit Entities	Support And Recommend Improvements

Part R	Lower Lobbyist Disclosure Thresholds to \$500	Oppose
Part S	Increase Lobbyist Penalties	Support And Recommend Improvements
Part T	Increase the “two year” [ban] to Five years, cover Elected officials, and explicitly prohibit lobbying.	Oppose
Part V	Financial Disclosure for Local Elected Officials	Support
Part W	Lobbyist Code of Conduct	Oppose

Governor Cuomo’s Executive Budget more broadly includes 24 different good government proposals including these 10 ethics proposals, along with campaign finance and voting bills. He also proposed in other budget bills, funds for clean contracting reforms and making the legislature follow the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL).

Reinvent Albany will separately publish its evaluation of campaign finance and voting measures in the Good Government and Ethics bill, and testify on economic development initiatives at the legislature’s joint hearing on the topic on February 12th.