



MEMO IN SUPPORT

S1473 (Breslin) / A3334 (McDonald)

Requires electronic financial disclosures of legislative members and candidates.

February 4, 2022

TITLE OF BILL

An act to amend the public officers law, in relation to electronic financial disclosures of members and candidates of the legislature.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

Section 1 of the bill amends subdivision 2 of Section 73-a (2) of the Public Officers Law to require that every member of the legislature and candidate for the legislature must file their annual statement of financial disclosure electronically in an electronic, readable, searchable and downloadable format. It also makes a technical correction to a table listing amounts for disclosure.

Section 2 of the bill adds a paragraph (b) that requires the Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) to make available an editable, electronic, readable, and searchable version of the annual statement of financial disclosure to anyone required to submit such forms.

Section 3 of the bill establishes the effective date as immediate, but for Section 1 which shall take effect January 1, 2023.

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

Reinvent Albany strongly supports this legislation because it will end the practice of legislators submitting financial disclosure statements in paper form. The paper format is less accessible to the public, as they are posted in a non-searchable PDF image format on JCOPE's website, and handwriting can be illegible. Additionally, the hand delivery of paper disclosure statements to the Legislative Ethics Commission and JCOPE has been [used to evade federal wire fraud statutes](#) in the past.

JCOPE currently has an electronic financial disclosure filing system, so requiring these statements to be filed electronically does not require any new work on JCOPE's part. We support this common-sense legislation, and support expanding it to require all JCOPE filers to submit disclosure statements electronically.