



## **MEMO OF SUPPORT**

### **S1500A (Breslin) / A3469 (McDonald)**

*Requires legislative members and candidates to link their financial disclosure statements on their official state and campaign websites.*

May 3, 2022

#### **TITLE OF BILL**

An act to amend the public officers law, in relation to requiring legislators and candidates for member of the legislature to provide a link to their financial disclosure statements on their official state and campaign websites.

#### **SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS**

Section 1 of the bill amends Section 73-a(2) of the Public Officers Law to require every member of the legislature and legislative candidate who maintain any official state or campaign websites to provide a visible link to their financial disclosure statements titled “My Financial Disclosure Statements.”

Section 2 requires that every member of the legislature and candidate for the legislature file disclosures in an electronic, readable, searchable and downloadable format.

Section 3 requires that the Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) make available to all filers an editable, electronic, readable and searchable version of the financial disclosure statements.

Section 4 of the bill establishes the effective date as the same as for Part QQ of Chapter 56 of the laws of 2022, however Section 2 shall take effect on January 1, 2023. Additionally, effective immediately the addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implementation are authorized to be made on or before such date.

#### **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.

Additionally, we support requiring that members of the legislature and candidates for legislature provide a link to their financial disclosure statements on their official website and/or campaign website. Currently financial disclosure statements for legislative candidates must be filed with JCOPE, but are not published on JCOPE's website. Instead, the public must request them in order to view them. This bill would increase transparency of these forms by requiring that they be posted online by both legislators and candidates on their own websites. This will give the public easier access to information about candidates running for state office, including whether or not they have potential conflicts of interest arising from their own personal or family business interests.

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.