



## MEMO OF SUPPORT

### S3507 (Skoufis)

*Requires members of regional economic development councils, including volunteers, to file financial disclosure statements*

March 2023

#### **TITLE OF BILL**

An act to amend the public officers law, in relation to requiring certain individuals to file financial disclosure forms.

#### **SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS**

Section 1 amends the Public Officers Law § 73-a (2)(a) to require any member of an economic development council (even if such member is a volunteer) to file an annual statement of financial disclosure.

Section 2 sets the effective date as the first of June next succeeding the date on which the bill becomes a law.

#### **STATEMENT OF SUPPORT**

Currently, Public Officers Law sections 73-a and 74 govern financial disclosure and conflict of interest rules for state officers and employees. Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs) are not covered by these laws, but have significant influence over the distribution of billions in state funds. According to the [REDC guidebook](#), since 2011 “over \$7.5 billion in state funding has been awarded to over 9,200 projects through a competitive process to spur job creation based on regional priorities.”

Also according to the guidebook, REDC members receive ethics training from Empire State Development, and complete “Statements of Interest” that list conflicts of interest that would require members to recuse themselves from votes or other actions. This is not the process used by any other state board or commission, whose members are required to file disclosure statements with the Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government, which then are subject to public disclosure upon request. We see no reason that members of REDCs, who influence substantial sums of state funds, should not file the same disclosure statements required of state public officers and employees. We support this legislation because it will ensure consistent application of the state’s ethics laws.