



MEMO OF SUPPORT

S5927 (Salazar)

Creates the nonpartisan legislative budget office

March 28, 2025

TITLE OF BILL

An act to amend the legislative law, in relation to creation of the nonpartisan legislative budget office.

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

Reinvent Albany strongly supports this bill because it will greatly increase the transparency of the budget process, increase the budget expertise available to the legislative branch, reduce the ability of the executive to make false and misleading statements about state spending, and generally increase the competence and credibility of New York State government.

In New York State, the Assembly majority, Assembly minority, Senate majority, and Senate minority parties each have their own individual budget staff. Not only is this process inefficient, but it also confuses the public, which must compare different analyses of the budget. The Senate, for example, releases its own “Blue Book” in response examining each executive budget, while the Assembly releases a “Yellow Book,” which offers much of the same information. We do not see the need for this duplicative process.

Establishing a single budget entity will produce better fiscal policy outcomes for both legislators and the public. We urge the Legislature to pass the bill, and the Governor to sign it.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

Section 1 adds to the Legislative Law a new §4-b titled “Non-Partisan Legislative Budget Office.”

Article 76 provides definitions, then provides that a new non-partisan legislative budget office's director shall be appointed by a joint resolution requiring a two-thirds vote of the Senate and Assembly. The director must be chosen by consensus after the Legislature's majority and minority leaders confer. The director shall be appointed without regard to political affiliation.

A deputy director shall be appointed by the director, and may only fill in the director's position until the expiration of that term. The director may hold no other position while serving, and may be removed by a two-thirds vote of either house.

Article 77 provides that the duties of the office are to:

- Provide information about budget, appropriation, program, and tax expenditure bills to the Legislature
- Examine and review financial and program information to determine revenue estimates and whether the state budget is balanced
- Report estimates of anticipated revenue forecasts to help pass the state budget in a timely manner
- Help determine the fiscal impact of proposed legislation at a legislator's request. The director will determine a system for prioritizing such requests in consultation with the chairs of Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means, and provide a description of this system to the Legislature).

When requested by leadership of the relevant committee, the legislative budget office shall provide information assisting with jurisdiction of the committee. The director is authorized to hire staff and determine their roles.

On March 1st of every year, the office shall submit to the legislative majority and minority leaders a report including written estimates of state revenues, an economic forecast, a summary of the Governor's proposed budget, and potential alternative sources of revenue. After submission, this report will be released to the public.

The office will be funded through annual legislative appropriations, and is permitted to use its funds to purchase up-to-date computer equipment and technology.

Section 2 amends Legislative Law §30 to allow the office to have access to all state departments, boards, bureaus, etc. to examine their books for the purpose of carrying out the office's duties.

Section 3 states that the bill takes effect immediately.