

BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE
CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
COMMON CAUSE/NY
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS/N.Y.S.
N.Y. PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP

Contact:
Larry Norden 212 998-6322
Dick Dadey 212 227-0342
Susan Lerner 212 691-6421
Barbara Bartoletti 518 469-8905
Blair Horner 518 436-0876

NEWS RELEASE

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REFORMERS: NEW YORKERS ARE FED UP WITH ALBANY GROUPS URGE LAWMAKERS TO ACT TO RESTORE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

MAY 5TH "ALBANY-ON-THE-RECORD" EVENT TO DRAW REFORMERS FROM ACROSS THE STATE

New Yorkers are fed up. Scandals have driven from office Governor Spitzer, Comptroller Hevesi, Senate Majority Leader Bruno and a growing number of state legislators. Some elected officials – including Governor Paterson – are currently under investigation. Many of these abuses of power were rooted in the absence of effective and independent ethics and fiscal watchdogs, tough ethics laws and adequate transparency in government.

Albany must respond with concrete reforms to show the public that lawmakers have gotten the message and are working to bolster confidence in state government.

Today we are announcing a campaign to get elected officials – and those who wish to become elected officials – to pledge to enact meaningful reforms. Over the next several weeks, we will urge elected officials to support measures that, at a minimum:

Restore the public's trust.

- Ensure that ethic, lobbying and campaign finance watchdogs are independent and powerful.
- End the practice of legislators drawing their own district lines.
- Provide fairness in allocating legislative resources, including distributions of "member items."
- Reform the legislature's rules to increase transparency, accountability, and public input.
- Ban the personal use of campaign contributions.

Reform the state's finances.

- Close obsolete public authorities.
- Establish an independent fiscal watchdog.
- Open up the government's budget books and put them on-line.

.Curb the power of special interests

- End "pay to play" for lobbyists and seekers – and receivers – of government contracts.
- Require the public disclosure of "independent" campaign contributions and close loopholes.
- Bolster the role of small donors in the campaign finance system.
- Restrict transfers from parties and legislative political committees to individual candidates
- Dramatically reduce the allowable size of campaign contributions.

We are also announcing that on May 5th our organizations, joined by many more from across the state, will convene an event in Albany to put Albany's leading political figures "on-the-record" in how they plan to change Albany now. The groups will continue to educate voters on the positions – and actions – needed to improve Albany.