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Watchdog Groups Oppose Reported New Ethics Commission Proposal

Reported appointment process is not independent, and unacceptably political

We believe the Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) is a public embarrassment to the people of New York and must be replaced by an independent ethics commission. We oppose reported plans to replace JCOPE with a new commission whose commissioners are directly appointed by the elected officials they regulate. Additionally, the reported plan appears to create a highly partisan commission that the Governor and majority leaders of the Legislature can control. This plan should not become law.

The Governor promised to replace the failed JCOPE and proposed a new, independent ethics commission in her executive budget. The core of her plan was that state elected officials would no longer directly appoint ethics commissioners, thus giving commissioners the independence to enforce ethics rules without fear or favor.

We agree with the Governor's analysis that any new ethics commission directly appointed by the state elected officials it regulates will be as fatally flawed as JCOPE and unable to hold the state's most powerful officials accountable.

Our groups have advanced an ethics [proposal developed by legal experts and watchdogs](#) inspired by best practices from other states. Our plan shows exactly how New York can create a new, independent state ethics commission centered around an appointment process that insulates commissioners from the powerful officials they regulate. Our proposal includes important safeguards to ensure the transparency and independence of both the appointment process and commission operations.

We continue to urge the Governor and Legislature to create an independent ethics commission and reject a new ethics commission that is directly appointed by the elected officials it regulates. New Yorkers deserve a truly independent commission, not simply substituting one flawed political entity for another.

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