



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Terrence Murphy

Watchdogs applaud movement of FOIL Expansion Bill through Investigations Committee

TERRENCE MURPHY January 10, 2018

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ALBANY, NY - The Senate Committee on Investigations and Government Operations held its first meeting of the 2018 legislative session this week and advanced legislation that expands the Freedom of Information Law and the Open Meetings Law to cover government-affiliated non-profit organizations. The good-government legislation would bring transparency to the murky world of government-affiliated non-profits like the Fort Schuyler Management Corporation and the Fuller Road Management Corporation, currently at the center of an ongoing corruption trial.

Senator Terrence Murphy, chairman of the Committee on Investigations and Government Operations said last year the Investigations Committee passed numerous good government, ethics and procurement reform measures. "We delved deep into affecting taxpayers like local tax payments on state land, the late mailing of STAR rebate checks and wasteful spending on television ads that seemed more at home in a re-election campaign," he said.

[January 9, 2018 Investigations and Government Operations Meeting](#) (Click Link to watch meeting footage)

"I plan to continue our open government approach this year through our whistleblower website and will exercise aggressive oversight throughout the state on economic development spending, off-budget slush funds and tax subsidies that achieve little to no results," Murphy said.

Reinvent Albany, a good-government group that has pushed for more transparency in economic development spending, told Capital Tonight that "The bill is the first indication this session Senator Flanagan and Senate Republicans are serious about addressing economic development accountability and transparency, as SUNY-affiliated not for profits like Fuller Road and Ft. Schuyler would be subject to the law. This legislation did not move in either house last year."

FOIL currently defines an agency as "any state or municipal department, board, bureau, division, commission, committee, public authority, public corporation, council, office or other governmental entity performing a governmental or proprietary function for the state or any one or more municipalities", but various government-controlled entities have asserted they are not subject to the law.

The bill, Senate Bill S4775-A, is supported by organizations such as BetaNYC, Citizens Union, Common Cause - New York, Consumers Union, League of Women Voters of New York State, National Freedom of Information Coalition, New York Civil Liberties Union, New York Public Interest Research Group, Pace Environmental Litigation Clinic, Reinvent Albany, and the Sunlight Foundation, would close the loophole. The bill is sponsored by State Senator Phil Boyle.