



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeremy Cooney

Senator Cooney, Assemblymember Solages Announce Passage of Bill to Promote Contract Transparency During States of Emergency in New York State

JEREMY COONEY June 10, 2024

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(ALBANY, NY) - Today, Senator Jeremy Cooney (D-Rochester) and Assemblymember Michaelle Solages (D-Elmont) announced the passage of their bill (S9171/A10281) to improve transparency and accountability in New York's contracting processes. The legislators explained that current rules allow contracts signed during states of emergency to avoid review and oversight by the Office of the State Comptroller. This bill would require state

agencies to publicly list when a contract has received an exemption, as well as require the agency to provide a summary of what the contract entails.

“Transparency promotes accountability, a necessary combination for good governance,” said Senator Cooney. “I’m proud to have worked with Assemblymember Solages to get this common-sense bill passed before the end of session to make sure New Yorkers know how our state resources are being used. It now goes to the Governor where we are hopeful it will be signed into law before the end of the year.”

“New Yorkers deserve transparency in how their tax dollars are spent, even in times of crisis,” said Assemblymember Michaelle C. Solages. “This legislation addresses a critical gap in the monitoring and oversight of state contracts, ensuring higher standards of accountability. I am honored to have sponsored this bill with Senator Cooney and am grateful for Comptroller DiNapoli's leadership. We strongly urge the Governor to sign this bill into law to protect the interests of New York taxpayers.”

“New York state spends billions on contracts, and taxpayers deserve to know what contracts are executed without the review of my office,” Comptroller DiNapoli said. “I want to thank Senator Cooney and Assemblymember Solages for their tireless work getting this legislation passed. I urge the Governor to do the right thing and sign it to strengthen the public’s confidence in the state contracting process.”

Oversight of state contracts is currently a core part of the Comptroller’s responsibilities, with contracts being subject to review and approval. However, during states of emergency, these

contracts are exempt from the standard review process. The legislators explained that their bill would promote transparency by requiring state agencies to post brief descriptions of any contracts signed in response to these emergencies. They also added that this would not impede the state's ability to respond in times of crisis, but would make sure the public is made aware of contracts signed during these periods.

Similar legislation had been passed last year but was vetoed by the Governor. The legislators stated that they were hopeful that changes made to this year's bill, namely that the bill would no longer be applied retroactively, would lead to it being signed by the Governor. The legislation was a departmental bill introduced in partnership with the Office of the State Comptroller.

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