



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

Senator Valesky: Actions Demonstrate Commitment to Bipartisanship and Improving Senate Operations

DAVID J. VALESKY December 16, 2009

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After 40 years of moving backward on reform, the State Senate took its first giant steps forward this year. Beginning with the creation of the bipartisan Temporary Committee on Rules and Administration Reform, and with immediate changes to bill sponsorship and other procedures, the effort included major changes in the way the State Senate operates, all only possible because of the new leadership of the Senate and the hard work of the Committee.

When broad, bipartisan rules reforms were adopted this summer, they were described as “historic reforms to make the Senate more open, accountable and inclusive.” The reforms were called “unprecedented” and were said to be “fulfilling a promise we made to the people of New York.” That was how Senate Minority Leader Dean Skelos described the reforms adopted by the whole Senate on July 16.

As I said at the time, reform of the Senate must and will continue. In the months since the historic changes, the Committee has been comprehensively evaluating the committee process, in an effort to make the committees more functional and to make the Senate more

bipartisan. We have identified possible solutions and will be working to promote various changes that I believe will improve the Senate's operation.

As part of this ongoing process, the Democratic Majority Conference, led by Senator Sampson, has demonstrated a real commitment to bipartisanship by discussing committee chairmanships with minority senators. This, too, is historic and unprecedented, and is just the latest in a long list of reforms enacted to empower individual members, regardless of party, for the benefit of all New Yorkers.

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