



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

Senator Liz Krueger Reacts to Ethics Reform Bill

LIZ KRUEGER January 20, 2010

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(Albany, New York)—The New York State Senate passed an ethics reform bill today, finally fulfilling a promise long made to New Yorkers. State Senator Liz Krueger expressed her hope that this would be the first step in the adoption of a series of necessary reforms to address the serious issues of questionable ethics and the influence of money that Albany faces.

"I have been an advocate for ethics reform since the day I first campaigned for Senate," said Senator Krueger. "I know our government can and should be held to higher standard. And today I voted for the ethics reform bill because I could not reject the clear incremental improvements over existing law contained in the legislation."

The bill was also largely supported by good government groups including the League of Women Voters, NYPIRG and Citizens Union.

Some key aspects of the bill included:

- Restoration of an independent state commission on lobbying and an expanded definition of lobbying;
- Creation of an independent executive ethics and compliance commission;
- Full public access to legislative financial disclosure filings;
- Creation of an Legislative Office of Ethics Investigation empowered to investigate ethics complaints brought by the public or other government entities;
- New enforcement powers for the Board of Elections in investigations of violations of campaign finance laws;
- New substantial penalties for candidates and committees found to violate those laws.

"Given how long I have been fighting for ethics reform, I simply cannot see the value in sacrificing these real improvements because the legislation does not go as far as I would like," said Senator Krueger. "The bill reflects a down payment on the ethics reform that New Yorkers truly deserve. We must now continue our progress and pass legislation that will limit lobbyist contributions, reform campaign finance rules, revoke the pensions of elected officials convicted of a crime while in office, and restrict how campaign funds can be spent."

The further reform that Senator Krueger alluded to include three bills she sponsors.

- S743, which would strengthen laws to ensure that campaign funds are not used for personal expenses;
- S744 which requires disclosure of business relationships between lobbyists and public officials and dramatically lowers the campaign contribution limits for lobbyists; and
- S1733 which prohibits public officials convicted of crimes connected to their office from receiving state pension benefits.

"The reforms passed today are not the end of the road," said Senator Krueger. "By moving to pass my other reform bills the Senate will prove to the public that they were only the beginning"