



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

Marking Up--In Public

MALCOLM A. SMITH May 19, 2009

Democracy is coming...

At around 9:30 this morning in a conference room on the 9th Floor of the Legislative Office Building, something truly historic happened.

For the first time in institutional memory, a bill was “marked up” in committee--specifically, the Cities Committee, chaired by [Senator Daniel Squadron](#).

"Marking up" is a truly democratic and transparent process whereby other legislators offer changes, amendments and improvements to the underlying idea of a bill **in public**.

Mark-up sessions are a [common practice in Washington, D.C.](#), but have not been seen in Albany where openness has [just recently become a principle by which to govern](#). I am proud that we upheld our commitment to openness and transparency and took another step towards returning government to the people of New York today.

So, here's what happened at the meeting...

Under discussion was [Senate Bill 3855](#) by [Senator Liz Krueger](#), legislation that would enact the "tenant rights omnibus act"—aimed at ensuring that tenants are empowered and have a voice over the space in which they live by leveling the playing field when a landlord is being non-responsive or neglecting their responsibilities. It was the only bill on the agenda and it was considered for an hour in great detail, out in public view.

Many Senators spoke at the meeting including Senator Frank Padavan, Senator Bill Perkins, and Chairman Squadron. Perkins and Squadron both offered substantive amendments to Liz's bill; I am told that she will look at the best way of incorporating them before the bill progresses through the rest of the legislative process.

This type of activity is a hallmark of our [Reform Agenda](#) and is, quite simply, good government and democracy in action.

I'm proud of Senator Squadron, Senator Krueger, and their staff for bringing government into the light and back to the people.