



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael H. Ranzenhofer

## Working to Enact Real Reforms

SENATOR MICHAEL H. RANZENHOFER September 21, 2016

| ISSUE: **ETHICS REFORM, ETHICS, CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM**

Look for...

Senator Mike Ranzenhofer's  
Monthly Column

...In your local newspaper  
the third week of every month

Senator Ranzenhofer's column appeared in the Amherst and Clarence Bees on September 21st

As your State Senator, I am continually working to change the way state government operates. That's why I wanted to share some of my recent efforts to enact comprehensive ethics reforms to promote integrity, ensure more openness and transparency, lower contribution limits and hold corrupt public officials accountable for their actions.

First and foremost, I pushed for a Constitutional Amendment to strip pensions from corrupt government officials. Those who betray the public trust should not be allowed to collect

taxpayer-funded pensions. I voted to end this practice.

During the 2016 Legislative Session, I also voted in favor of these additional, new reforms:

- Approving Senate Rules that impose term limits for Legislative Leaders and Committee Chairs;
- Enacting new campaign finance reforms;
- Passing new lobbying and political consultant reforms; and
- Improving the procedures and operations of the Joint Commission on Public Ethics.

Each one of these reforms is a strong first step to ensuring more accountability and integrity, but there is still more work to be done.

This year, I introduced a tough new ethics bill (S7837) to lower campaign contributions across the board, while closing the LLC loophole. Under my plan, campaign contribution limits would be decreased to the lowest levels in decades.

My legislation would drastically diminish the amount of money individuals can donate to a candidate. For example, the contribution maximum in a general election for statewide candidates would decrease from \$44,000 to \$25,000. For Senate candidates, it would be reduced from \$11,000 to \$6,250. The limit would decline from \$4,400 to \$2,500 for Assembly candidates.

All non-individual entities, such as limited liability companies, labor organizations and associations, would be subject to a maximum \$5,000 contribution limit.

Decreasing campaign contributions across the board will take some of the money out of politics, lessening the role of special interests in our state government. It will also weaken the influence of more wealthy donors, preventing millionaires and billionaires from using their money to try to buy elections.

Finally, my legislation would increase transparency and expand disclosure requirements for independent expenditure committees. All too often, we see or read political advertisements supporting some position, and we wonder who are these special interests and what is really in it for them.

My bill will pull aside this curtain and shed light on the real agenda of these committees. Under my proposal, the real players behind these types of political advertisements, and their financial interests with the state or any other public entity, would be disclosed.

Overall, my tough new ethics bill will reduce the impact of money on elections, provide more information to voters, and curtail unidentifiable money flowing to campaigns. As your State Senator, I will continue to focus on ensuring your state government works for you.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2015-S7837**

- 
- Introduced
  
  - - In Committee Assembly
    - In Committee Senate
  
  - - On Floor Calendar Assembly
    - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Relates to media disclosure requirements and political contribution limitations

May 13, 2016

In Senate Committee Elections

Sponsored by Michael H. Ranzenhofer

Do you support this bill?