



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senate gives final OK to proposed Constitutional amendment to deny public pensions for convicted public officials; NY voters will decide the issue this November

THOMAS F. O'MARA January 30, 2017

| ISSUE: **PUBLIC CORRUPTION**



Sadly, public corruption has taken front and center stage in New York State government far too often over the past decade and, especially, over the past few years. Despite the existing, numerous laws and rules that have long been in place to prevent public corruption, there remain public officials who ignore these laws and break the public trust. After every instance of another public official convicted of another crime that tears down the public trust, the public outcry for more reform and tougher laws is more than understandable and warranted.

Albany, N.Y., January 30—The State Senate today gave second approval to legislation co-sponsored by Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) that will amend the State Constitution to deny public pension benefits to public officials convicted of corruption and other felony crimes that break the public trust.

“Sadly, public corruption has taken front and center stage in New York State government far too often over the past decade and, especially, over the past few years,” said O'Mara. “Despite the existing, numerous laws and rules that have long been in place to prevent public corruption, there remain public officials who ignore these laws and break the public trust. After every instance of another public official convicted of another crime that tears down the public trust, the public outcry for more reform and tougher laws is more than understandable and warranted. At the very least, these public officials should be lose taxpayer-funded pension benefits and we're acting swiftly to amend the State Constitution to permit this denial.”

Amending the state Constitution requires legislative approval in two consecutive years followed by voter approval of a statewide ballot referendum.

The legislation O'Mara co-sponsors (S418/A1749), which the Senate and Assembly approved for the first time in 2016, would deny public pension benefits to elected officials, direct gubernatorial appointees, municipal managers, department heads, chief fiscal officers, judges and other, high-level public policymakers convicted of felonies directly related to their public positions.

The Assembly also approved the legislation for the second time today. It will go before the voters this November.