



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie: Legislature Passes Measures Continuing Efforts To Crack Down On Corruption

JOHN FRIOT January 31, 2017



State Senator Patty Ritchie is announcing measures she supported to improve accountability and ensure corrupt government officials face financial consequences for their actions have passed the Senate.

Under a measure approved Monday (S.418), the state will be empowered to reduce or revoke the taxpayer-funded pension of a public officer who is convicted of a felony related to their

official duties.

This Constitutional amendment, which was also approved by the Assembly, will be presented to voters for final approval on Election Day this fall. Due to Constitutional restrictions related to state pensions, an earlier reform measure passed in 2011 only applied to public officials who joined the retirement system after 2011. The legislation needed to be passed by both houses of the Legislature in two consecutive legislative sessions, and was approved by both the Senate and Assembly last year.

“Public officials owe it to those they represent to be honest, transparent and ethical—and when they aren’t they need to be held accountable,” said Senator Ritchie.

“I was pleased to join with my colleagues to pass this important pension forfeiture measure, which will help to ensure corrupt government officials face very serious consequences for their crimes.”

Under the measure approved this week, public officers—including elected officials, direct gubernatorial appointees, municipal managers, department heads, chief fiscal officers and policy-makers—convicted of felonies directly related to their duties could be subject to a pension reduction or revocation following notice and a court hearing.

In addition, the Legislature also took steps to regulate outside income for lawmakers. Under a joint resolution passed Monday, any member of the Legislature earning over \$5,000 through outside employment must submit a written request for an advisory opinion to the Legislative Ethics Commission to ensure employment is consistent with the New York State Public Officers Law.