



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Kavanagh

Statement from Senator Kavanagh on Senate Majority Rejecting Provisions to Enact Early Voting and Close the LLC Loophole in the State Budget

BRIAN KAVANAGH March 30, 2018

| ISSUE: **VOTING, EARLY VOTING, LLC LOOPHOLE, CAMPAIGN FINANCE, ELECTIONS**

(Albany, NY) — Late Thursday night and early Friday morning, Senator Brian Kavanagh and his colleagues in the Democratic Conference introduced five amendments to S7505C, a bill to enact portions of the State budget related to public protection and general government. The amendments were intended to restore crucial provisions that had been omitted from the bill during negotiations at the insistence of the Senate Majority.

Senator Kavanagh spoke in favor of an amendment that would have enacted early voting and, on behalf of his Conference, **presented an amendment** to close the notorious "LLC Loophole" in the State's campaign finance laws, which allows nearly unlimited, often virtually anonymous donations to politicians and political parties. Both are items that Senator Kavanagh had sponsored and passed in the Assembly in prior years when he served in that house, both were included in the Assembly budget resolution that passed again this year, and both were supported by Governor Andrew Cuomo, and included in his Executive Budget proposal in January of this year.

These two amendments — along with three others to enact the Child Victims Act, reform the criminal justice system, and enact stronger gun laws — were voted down by the Senate

Majority. Because the amendments were defeated, Senator Kavanaugh voted against the public protection and general government portion of the budget.

Senator Kavanaugh released the following statement on early voting and closing the LLC Loophole:

“Free and fair elections are the foundation of our system of government — and they’re what we should aspire to here in New York State. But right now, while we often say that every vote counts, our rhetoric is far ahead of our reality.

“Without early voting or other reforms, our outdated election laws disenfranchise New Yorkers who happen to be busy on a certain Tuesday. They make it impossible for some eligible voters to make their voices heard — and that must change. When all eligible voters have a chance to cast their ballots without undue obstacles, our democracy works better. That’s why advocates from across the state, led by the Let New York Vote Coalition, have been calling for these reforms — and especially championing early voting this year.

“Recognizing that this reform might come with some modest costs, we proposed that the State budget include funding for early voting, to avoid imposing new costs on localities. To fail to enact early voting — as the Senate Majority chose to do last night — is a fundamental failure of our government.

“But that is not where last night’s failures ended. The LLC Loophole allows entrenched, deep-pocketed donors to funnel nearly unlimited funds to politicians and political parties with virtual anonymity. It allows special interests to overwhelm the voices of everyday New Yorkers. And it flies in the face of common sense. Allowing business entities to buy influence wholesale is patently undemocratic — and the Senate Majority’s refusal to close the LLC Loophole is indefensible.

“Both early voting and closing the LLC Loophole were included in the Assembly budget resolution. Both were supported by my Democratic colleagues in the Senate. Both were backed by Governor Andrew Cuomo. And both were defeated by Senate Majority last night.

“It is unconscionable that as we are deciding on how to spend nearly \$170 billion on behalf of the taxpayers and all residents of New York, the Senate Majority is also choosing to effectively limit the hours New Yorkers can vote and to refuse to close an egregious loophole in our campaign finance laws that only serves deep-pocketed donors.

“Notwithstanding these setbacks, I will keep working with my colleagues and advocates from around the state to pass these reforms.”

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2017-S7400A

- Introduced

- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
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- ○ Passed Assembly
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-

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January 12, 2018

In Senate Committee [Rules](#)

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