



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Senate Democrats Fail To Pass Republican Amendments On Election Mandate Relief And Stronger Campaign Finance Reform

JOHN J. FLANAGAN March 6, 2019

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New York State Senate Republicans recently proposed a series of common-sense amendments to ensure localities are not left with massive unfunded mandates and to prevent anyone seeking business with the state and localities from donating to campaigns for a period of time.

Senate Democrats unanimously rejected each amendment.

“Senate Democrats are racing through their agenda with zero consideration for the massive costs they are putting on already stressed localities, and that they continue to reject mandate relief illustrates how little they care about small counties that could least afford these immediate costs. Further, the Senate Democrats unwillingness to tighten campaign finance rules speaks to their hypocrisy,” said Senate Republican Leader John J. Flanagan.

The amendments:

- Create an Early Voting Fund - Republicans proposed establishing an early voting fund to cover the costs now associated with the measures passed by Democrats, who indicated that the Executive in prior years dedicated \$8 million towards the endeavor. Estimates peg the cost as \$500,000 to \$1 million per county. This unfunded mandate will hurt localities now forced to pick up the tab without being reimbursed. Ironically, a bill to create an Early Voting Fund was carried by Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins in 2018, though she and her conference voted against the Republican effort today to bring mandate relief to localities; and
- Prevent Conflicts of Interests in Campaign Finance - Republicans offered an amendment that went even further than the Democratic bill before the house looking to bar businesses seeking state contracts from making campaign donations for a period of six months. The amendment would have barred entities from making campaign donations to office holders seeking both state and local contracts.

“The unintended consequences and massive costs on local municipalities from these unfunded mandates are driving us directly toward a chaotic election season for communities across New York. The Senate Democrats refuse to act on or even acknowledge the dire need to provide mandate relief so our local boards of election can provide secure, open and

accurate elections for our citizens. Instead, the new Majority continues blindly charging ahead with their unfunded agenda,” said Senator Fred Akshar.

“From bid-rigging scandals to corruption trials and guilty verdicts, hard-working New Yorkers are fed up with the lack of ethics in state government. Simply put, businesses seeking state contracts should not be allowed to make campaign donations to office holders. This amendment would help to end Albany’s pay-to-play culture and restore the public's trust in their state government. I am disappointed that this critical reform was blocked today by the Democrats,” said Senator Michael H. Ranzenhofer.