



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Skoufis

Skoufis Seeks to Ban Anonymous Legislative Grants

JAMES SKOUFIS February 26, 2019

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Skoufis Seeks to Ban Anonymous Legislative Grants--*Bill is in response to Kiryas Joel's anonymous \$2 million award*

Newly elected state Senator James Skoufis (D-Hudson Valley) announced he will soon introduce legislation to prohibit anonymous legislative grants, calling the initiative a matter of accountability and public disclosure. Typically, every legislative grant is submitted by and attributed to a specific senator, but in 2018, there was one noticeable exception: an anonymous \$2 million award for the Village of Kiryas Joel.

“Grants are usually trumpeted by state legislators yet, just last year, everyone in the Senate ran for the hills when asked who was responsible for Kiryas Joel’s anonymous \$2 million grant,” said Skoufis. “As Chairman of the Senate’s investigations committee, I’m determined to fumigate Albany of its smoke and mirrors, and if someone isn’t willing to put their name on a legislative grant, that grant should be stopped in its tracks.”

In February 2018, the Times Herald-Record reported that of all the legislative grants itemized in a 1,406-page state Senate document, the only award without a specific sponsor was the anonymous \$2 million award for Kiryas Joel. Nine months later, the Village of Kiryas Joel

delivered its 4,157 votes for Republican Senate candidate Tom Basile; Skoufis overcame the bloc vote to win the election.

“These grants are paid for with our tax dollars and we deserve to know which legislators are securing them and why,” explained County Legislator Peter Tuohy (R-Monroe). “I share Senator Skoufis’ desire to hold the process more accountable and transparent and look forward to working with him to pass this important bill.”

“My new legislation is about ending special treatment and flipping over the rugs to see what’s been swept under them all these years,” said Skoufis. “There’s a new sheriff in town and it’s long past time every community is made to play by the same set of rules.