



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Anna M. Kaplan

## NY Legislature Passes Good Government Bills Ensuring Transparency For Public Meetings

SEAN ROSS COLLINS June 11, 2021

| ISSUE: **PROTECTING TAXPAYERS, GOOD GOVERNMENT, GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY, OPEN GOVERNMENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT**



*Study by the New York Coalition for Open Government shows 20% of local governments fail to post meeting documents online before a meeting occurs and 70% fail to post timely meeting minutes*

ALBANY, NY (June 11, 2021) - This week, the New York State Senate passed good government legislation by State Senator Anna M. Kaplan (D-North Hills) and Assemblymember Amy Paulin (D-Scarsdale), **S.1150A** and **S.4704A**, which will ensure that meeting documents are made available to the public prior to a public meeting, and ensure that minutes from public meetings are posted online in a timely fashion.

Bill sponsor Senator Anna M. Kaplan said "weaknesses in the State's Open Meetings Law allow far too many municipalities to hold public meetings in the shadows, refusing to do the right thing because true transparency isn't required of them in the law. Since these local governments have chosen not to step up and make their proceedings open and transparent, we have a responsibility to tighten up the law and bring them into the light."

Bill sponsor Assemblymember Amy Paulin said "We must remove all barriers so the public can better understand the actions and decisions made by their local government. The technology exists to post public meeting documents easily and in a timely way. By providing more transparency we build trust and allow meaningful public participation. We all benefit from better governance, and the public can offer insightful views and steer processes in a positive way."

A recent study by the New York Coalition for Open Government ("*Local Governments Struggle with Timely Posting of Meeting Minutes*") found that many local governments across New York State fail to live up to the spirit of the State's Open Meetings Law by restricting citizens' right to access information from public institutions. Notably, the study found that 20% of the local governments surveyed failed to post their full meeting documents online for the public to see before their meeting, and 70% failed to post minutes from their meetings in a timely fashion.

The bills, [S.1150A](#) and [S.4704A](#), will, respectively:

- Amend the public officers law to require documents to be discussed at open meetings be made available upon request or posted on the public body's website at least 24 hours prior to such open meeting
- Require public bodies that maintain a regularly and routinely updated website and utilize a high speed internet connection to make meeting minutes, or unabridged audio or video recordings, or unabridged written transcripts available on the public body's website.

Following passage in both houses of the legislature, the bills now go to the Governor.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

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**[2021-S1150A](#)**

- Introduced
  - ◦ In Committee Assembly
    - In Committee Senate
  - ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
    - On Floor Calendar Senate
  - ◦ Passed Assembly
    - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Relates to making certain documents available for open meetings

January 07, 2021

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by [Anna M. Kaplan](#)

Do you support this bill?

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**2021-S4704A**

[Open Government](#), [Good Government](#), [public bodies](#)

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- 
- Introduced
  
  - - In Committee Assembly
    - In Committee Senate
  
  - - On Floor Calendar Assembly
    - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
  - - Passed Assembly
    - Passed Senate
  
  - Delivered to Governor
  
  - Signed By Governor
  
  -

Requires that minutes of meetings of a public body be posted on its website

February 09, 2021

Senate Floor Calendar

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Do you support this bill?