



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo statement on lieutenant governor

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO April 12, 2022

| ISSUE: **LEUTENANT GOVERNOR; ETHICS REFORM**

“The arrest of Lt. Gov. Brian Benjamin continues a disappointing, troubling and frustrating trend for state government and upon Gov. Hochul’s administration. The governor has stated that she would make it a priority to ‘change the culture of Albany.’ This has not happened under her leadership as has been demonstrated by her vetting and choice of this lieutenant governor, a lack of transparency in the late state budget and changes that she proposed to ethics that gives the majority of appointments to a new commission to her office and Democratic majorities in the Legislature.

In recent years, we have seen measures put in place that are intended to protect the public but instead only secure power for the majorities. These measures included a campaign finance system that provides taxpayer dollars to political campaigns. This year’s budget allocated over \$20 million of taxpayer money for welfare for politicians, which should be reversed. As evidenced by the allegations made against the lieutenant governor and other high-profile abuses of New York City’s public finance system, this and other policies are not working as intended and only contribute to political corruption.

I have championed real, substantive and significant ethics reform since first being elected to the Senate. It also is important that, as we have seen several cases demonstrated in a short period, we promptly consider legislation that I have proposed since 2007 that would reform

aspects of the lieutenant governor's office. We must make state government more accountable and transparent to those we represent.”

Sen. Griffo has advanced legislation since 2007 that would:

- Provide a method for filling a vacancy in the office of lieutenant governor. The governor would nominate a new lieutenant governor within 30 days of the vacancy, and the Senate and Assembly would confirm or reject that individual through independent votes in each house. Sen. Griffo's bill would make state law identical to the federal Constitution, where the 25th Amendment allows the president to nominate a vice president if a vacancy in the office were to occur. The vice president would take office after receiving a majority vote of both houses of Congress. (S3774)
- Remove the constitutional provision that the lieutenant governor shall act as governor whenever the governor is absent from the state. (S3775)
- Change Election Law to require that candidates for governor and lieutenant governor run together as a slate in a primary election, as is currently required in a general election. The present statute allows for the prospect of incompatible candidates being forced to run together and serving together in office. (S3819)

###