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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS *of New York State*

ETHICS AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM UPDATE

On January 13th, leaders in both houses (Assembly majority and minority along with Senate majority) announced an agreement on a reform bill for campaign finance enforcement and ethics reform. It can be found on the Senate website as S6457, which creates an executive ethics and compliance commission and the NY state commission on lobbying ethics and compliance. We were at the Capitol during the negotiations and offered input to the process. What emerged from the negotiations was a bill that contained some, but not all the proposals the League had long sought. The bill does not purport to address the issue of limiting campaign contributions. This was not the subject of negotiations; and we will continue to press for this piece separately.

While not everything that the League and our good government colleagues sought, the proposed changes in S 6457 would improve both ethics and campaign finance enforcement and create greater transparency. Specifically it will:

1. Strengthen the enforcement unit within the State Board of Elections and increase transparency of filings and enforcement.
2. Create three new oversight agencies for ethics and lobbying.
3. Require more extensive disclosure from legislators and lobbyists.

"Although this is far from a perfect solution to the reforms needed in Albany, this moves us further toward increased enforcement and more transparency. We will continue coming back to the legislature for stronger campaign finance legislation and other reforms for which the League has long advocated." stated our Legislative Director, Barbara Bartoletti.

The Governor announced a more sweeping set of reforms in his State of the State address earlier this month but those proposals have not been the subject of negotiations between the Governor and the Legislature and are not expected to receive two-house consideration.

We know that reform will remain front and center during the coming year and, in formulating our position on this bill, we have taken care to ensure that we can continue an ongoing dialogue pressing for further reform. We will be sending League Presidents and Action Chairs an e-mail shortly outlining details in the bill and providing talking points to local leagues for lobbying purposes.