

CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
COMMON CAUSE/NEW YORK
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS/N.Y.S.
NEW YORK PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP

SUPPORT "SUNSHINE WEEK" LEGISLATION

Our groups support legislation listed below, part of the reform package put forward for "Sunshine Week," believing that greater transparency is necessary to inform the public about government deliberations and allow them to hold public officials accountable. The bills taken together present a package that will strengthen existing state law related to freedom of information requests and procedures, the public's ability to webcast or record government proceeding, violations of the open meetings law and the provision of information on state government websites in languages other than English. We believe that greater transparency will allow the public to more closely follow government actions and may result in them become more engaged, weighing in on the decisions that are made by government. The package includes the following bills, which are supported by our groups:

S7054/A10196 (Oppenheimer/Destito) – Provides for remedies for actions taken when open meetings are closed in violation of law.

S4284/A5873 (Valesky/Pretlow) – Directs public bodies to make or cause to be made all reasonable efforts to ensure that meetings are held in an appropriate facility which can adequately accommodate members of the public who wish to attend.

S6134-A/A6484 (C. Johnson/Latimer) – Limits the time state agencies would have to appeal article 78 Supreme Court judgments against them for violations of freedom of information laws.

S3195/A10093 (Valesky/Destito) – Requires open meetings to be open to be photographed, broadcast and recorded by audio or video means subject to reasonable rules governing the location of equipment and personnel.

S3555A (Serrano) – Grants agencies the authority to waive fees relating to Freedom of Information Law requests.

S6883/A4387 (Serrano/Ortiz) – Requires state departments, divisions, commissions, agencies and other entities which have a website to provide a link on such website to non-English information.

S7109 (Krueger) – Relates to publishing records of public interest by agencies and the legislature.

We urge your support for this legislation.