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NEWS RELEASE

GOVERNMENT REFORM GROUPS “BLOW GASKET” CALL ON GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE TO AGREE ON COMPREHENSIVE CORRUPTION-BUSTING REFORM PACKAGE URGE GOV TO PROLONG SESSION IF THEY DON’T

With only a few days left of the legislative session, the Legislature is poised to recess without passing a single significant anti-corruption measure, despite a crime wave of corruption that has engulfed the capital and sent the leaders of both respective houses to prison. In January, government reform groups initially gathered to call on lawmakers to address:

1. The limited liability company “loophole.” It's clear that treating limited liability companies (LLCs) more favorably than other businesses for campaign contribution purposes has blown a huge hole into New York's already porous campaign finance system. We urge that LLC's be treated like other businesses when it comes to contribution limits.
2. Public officials' outside income. Far too often, corrupt officials have been using their public office to enrich themselves personally. We urge that steps be taken to reduce the incentives for officials to “cash in” through their non-legislative employment.
3. Budget openness. The opacity of New York's budgetary decisions increases the risk of officials seeking to reward themselves or their friends through the appropriation of public dollars. A more open budget process will help boost New Yorkers' confidence in decisions about how to spend public monies.

These items would most directly curtail the abuse of the campaign finance system, conflicts of interest, and opportunities for personal enrichment.

Corruption is of urgent importance to the public. In May, Siena College Research Institute released a poll which found that 96% of New Yorkers think corruption is an “important” issue to deal with before the end of session, and 81% say it's “very important”. Forty percent think the problem more serious in the Legislature, and a third think it's worse in the Executive branch.

If the Legislature fails to act, the Governor must assert his leadership by prolonging the session until they do.

REFORMERS URGE END OF SESSION ACTION ON CORRUPTION, PAGE 2

“How many politicians must be taken away in handcuffs before the New York State legislature will pass laws to curb corruption? Politicians should serve the people not themselves. The Legislature must act now to restore the public’s trust in our state government.” Barbara Bartoletti, LWVNYS Legislative Director

"The public knows something is very wrong in Albany. Months after both legislative leaders were convicted of corruption, the legislature has time for fantasy sports, mixed martial arts, and payday loans but no time for reforms" Said Liz Marcello, Campaign Manager for Reinvent Albany

Dick Dadey, Executive Director, Citizens Union, said, “That the 2016 NYS legislative session is about to end and not one piece of ethics reform legislation has been enacted to address our state’s systemic corruption, *even* in light of the twin convictions of former legislative leaders Skelos and Silver, makes New York State a national disgrace. For the past ten years, our state has been focused on strengthening our system of ethics oversight and enforcement, and increasing the penalties for those convicted of corruption. But we have failed to address the causes of corruption and enact measures that would prevent *them*. We will not see less corruption in our state capitol until we begin to move money from our political system.

“The Legislature is on the cusp of concluding a six-month session without taking a single step forward on ethics reform,” said Susan Lerner, Executive Director of Common Cause/NY. “There’s still time to get it right, but if lawmakers won’t respond to their constituents’ demands, than voters will have to consider that information in the Fall.”

“The silence is almost deafening. Despite unprecedented scandals that have toppled the state's top legislative leaders, the governor and Legislature seem to be incapable of responding with comprehensive corruption-busting measures," said Blair Horner, NYPIRG Executive Director. "New Yorkers deserve more than rhetoric and hand wringing from our elected officials, they need real reforms to respond to what the US Attorney has called a 'culture of corruption.'”

"With two days left in the legislative session, somehow it still feels like Groundhog’s Day,” said DeNora M. Getachew, Campaign Manager & Legislative Counsel at the Brennan Center for Justice. “Legislators must act now to close the LLC loophole created by the board of elections. And, they should institute comprehensive campaign finance reform, including establishing a program that allows candidates to run competitive campaigns by matching small donations from everyday citizens."