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NEWS RELEASE

**GOVERNOR CUOMO, LEGISLATURE MUST ACT IMMEDIATELY TO RESTORE
PUBLIC TRUST BY ADDRESSING ETHICAL AND CORRUPTION PROBLEMS
REVEALED BY TRIAL**

Documents released during the trial of a former top aide to Governor Cuomo revealed stunning failures in New York's ethics oversight system, according to a coalition of civic groups. Highlighting documents revealed during the trial, Citizens Union, Common Cause, the League of Women Voters, the New York Public Interest Research Group and Reinvent Albany today called on Governor Cuomo and the State Legislature to act quickly and enact sweeping reforms that respond to these revelations. Specifically, the groups urged that Albany embrace the central proposals contained in the "Restore Public Trust" effort:

Ban "Pay to Play." Enact strict "pay to play" restrictions on state vendors. The U.S. Attorney has charged that \$800 million in state contracts were rigged to benefit campaign contributors to the governor, underscoring the need to strictly limit contributions from those seeking state contracts.

Close the "LLC Loophole." This loophole allows essentially unlimited campaign contributions via Limited Liability Companies. LLCs have been at the heart of some of Albany's largest scandals.

Strict Limits on Outside Income. Real limits on the outside income for legislators and the executive branch.

Effective Watchdogs. Truly independent, effective, well-resourced, ethics enforcement agencies are needed (*e.g.*, JCOPE, SBOE, ABO), including **increased funding for the Authorities Budget Office**, which oversees economic development spending.

Clean Contracting. Basic accountability measures that would result in an open, ethical, and efficient way to award government contracts, an area that was identified as a key problem in the indictments of the governor's top aides.

Real Budget Transparency. Make lump-sum budget appropriations and the resulting expenditures fully transparent.

Pass a Database of Deals. The public should have a "one-stop shop" place to see all the state contracts that have been awarded, the terms and the process that led to the award.

Subject government-affiliated not-for-profit organizations to FOIL and the Open Meetings Law. Several entities involved in the alleged bid rigging scandal did not follow laws, which agencies do, and may have prevented the corruption before it occurred.

Examples of the failures of New York's ethics laws are attached.

Questions raised by the Percoco trial

According to testimony and evidence presented at the trial, Mr. Percoco, while outside of government service and running the governor's re-election campaign, was able to keep his security card to gain access to the executive chamber and appears to have been able to use his old office, including conducting business on the executive office telephone.

Question: Who approved this decision and was JCOPE consulted about this arrangement?

According to testimony and evidence presented at the trial, Mr. Percoco was allowed to have an outside consulting business while running the campaign and, apparently was still deeply involved in government decision-making. Legal advice was given to him while he was employed outside of government by an Administration official.

Question: Was JCOPE consulted on this arrangement?

According to testimony at the trial, then-gubernatorial candidate Cuomo, who was also the incumbent Attorney General, traveled on a personal jet for his gubernatorial campaign.

Question: Did the state's ethics watchdog at that time, the Commission on Public Integrity, approve this travel?

According to testimony and evidence presented at the trial, campaign contributions were directed by an outside lobbyist to the governor's re-election campaign through a network of limited liability companies. According to the evidence, at least some of those contributions were disguised by being sent from LLCs that did not contain the name of the controlling entity.

Question: How was this decision and these donations vetted by the Administration?

According to testimony and evidence presented at the trial, an outside lobbyist regularly communicated with top Administration officials through their private email accounts. Contained in those emails were decisions that directly impacted public policies.

Question: Why was it that so many high ranking officials were allowed to conduct business through personal emails?