

HELP FIX ALBANY NOW!

Legislative Procedures Update Study

Our League will be participating with the State League and other NYS chapters in an Update Study of NYS Legislative Procedures as summarized below. The two recent corruption convictions of New York lawmakers have left the state good government groups and citizens concerned over the ethical issues inherent in outside income for legislators. In 2015, the Center for Public Integrity ranked New York State government as the most corrupt of the 50 states, with the most legislators forced out of office for ethical or criminal offenses. We will have a special membership meeting on **Tuesday October 18th at 10 AM** to noon to vote on the Consensus Questions that have been proposed by the LWVNY. Jean McGarry, Jackie Moriarty, Daisy Tyler and Margaret Sellers are preparing for the meeting. You are welcome to join us. You will find the materials needed on the LWVNY web page. We need a quorum of 15 members to make this vote count in the statewide total. Non-members are welcome but cannot be part of the consensus. The meeting will be held at Deisings Bakery on North Front St. You will be able to order from their menu as you wish. We will be taking reservations to assure a quorum. Email Margaret Sellers at mcsellers@aol.com or call 845-339-3180.

Summary

During the 2015 LWVNY State Convention, the delegates approved the Board recommended Program Update Study of our position on **Legislative Procedures (1977)**. The section of the current position that we are looking at in this study reads:

“The legislature should continue to serve as a part-time body. Terms for legislators should be longer, and possibly staggered.”

The Legislative Procedures position is critical to our core mission as a state good government group. Many of the public corruption scandals involving members of the state legislature involve outside income, self-dealing, bribery, and fraud. The Moreland Commission Report, issued in December 2013 cites “One out of every eleven legislators to leave office since 1999 has done so under a cloud of ethical or criminal violations...” Banning or limiting outside income is a very important issue in ethics reform. Our current position warrants reexamination in this context since it constrains our approach to the outside income issue.

The update study will address the ambiguities in the current position and re-focus the position on the policies most significant to ethics reform and performance of the Legislature: ***Outside income, Length of terms, Staggered terms, Tenure for Legislative Leadership.***

Summary of Consensus Questions

Outside Income

Q1. Should there be limits on income from outside employment by state legislators?

Q2. If there are limits, should:

1. All outside earned income be prohibited?

2. New York follow the federal model using a percentage of base salary?
3. A dollar amount to be specified? If, yes, how much?
4. Some other criteria applied. Please specify:

Q3. Should legislators' salaries be weighted by the cost of living in different regions of the state?

Term Lengths for State Legislators

Assembly 2 year terms or 4 year terms?

Should terms be staggered?

Senate 4 year terms or 4 year terms?

Should terms be staggered?

Legislative Leadership and Committee Chairs

Q1. Should there be restrictions on how long a particular legislator is allowed to serve in any of the leadership positions?

Q2. Which ones?

Q3. If you restrict a member who holds one of these titles, shall that person be allowed to take on a different title after that term expires?

Q4. If you restrict a member holds one of these titles, should it be a life-time limit or for a specified period of time?

Q5. Should there be a restricted tenure for committee chairs?

Q6. If you restrict the length of time one can hold a committee's chair, shall that person be allowed to take on a different committee's chair after that "term: expires?

Q7. If you restrict the length of time one can hold a committee's chair, should it be a life-time limit or should reappointment be allowed after a specified period of time?

Q8. Should stipends (lulus) continue for committee chairs and all leadership positions?