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Public Corruption Prevention and Enforcement Act

The corrupt actions committed by public officials, frequently featured in newspaper headlines and prime time newscasts, damage the integrity of our government and weaken the civic vitality of our communities. I advocate a multi-pronged approach to discourage and, where necessary, punish behavior that is contrary to the basic responsibilities inherent to public service.

The current legislative proposals created by my office and the New York State Bar advance multiple measures designed both to prevent corrupt activity and to enhance enforcement against those who violate the public trust.

Prevent Sponsors and their Relatives from having a Financial Interest in or Receiving a Benefit from a Grant

This would prohibit elected officials from funneling “kick-backs” (i.e. government grants) to friends and supporters thereby ending Albany’s pay-to-play system.

Expand Defrauding the Government Provisions

This would create the crimes of Scheme to Defraud the Government in the First and Second Degrees, which includes outlawing schemes involving public servants and those who seek to corrupt the operation of government.

Amend the Penal Law Bribery Provision

This removes the requirement that *both parties* explicitly and knowingly agree to a bribe and replaces it with a provision which states that bribery occurs if there was an exchange of money or goods with the *intent to influence a public servant*. This change would make the definition of bribery of a public official consistent with all other New York State and federal bribery laws.

Increase Disclosure in both the Public Officers Law and the Election Law

This would end the provisions in state laws which permit the redaction of value or monetary amounts on the annual statements of financial disclosure by government officials. It also would require disclosure of relationships with non-profit organizations. This provision would clarify where a public official’s income is actually coming from and would make it far more difficult for officials to hide improper financial dealings.