

8/22/2016

Sheila Birnbaum, Chair  
NYS Commission on Legislative, Judicial, and Executive Compensation  
64 Beaver Street, Box 454  
New York, NY 10004

Dear Chairwoman Birnbaum,

I must object, in the strongest terms, to any proposed legislative pay raise unless major ethics reforms are enacted. Considering the numerous scandals and examples of corruption that have come to light recently, taking bold action to prevent anyone else from abusing our government system for personal gain is the only way to restore people's faith in our lawmakers' ability to represent the people's interests.

I believe that a comprehensive ethics reform package, especially one that eliminates "lulus" and sets a ban on outside income, is needed to restore faith in the financial and ethical transparency of our legislative body.

A ban on outside income for legislators would reduce the possibility for impropriety and double-dealing that has shaken and crumbled the foundation of trust, which constituents and taxpayers have placed in the State legislature. I would also urge you to consider a package of strong ethics reforms that would strip offenders of their pensions, stop the abuse of the LLC loophole for contributions, and other measures designed to make it harder to abuse the system and provide harsher punishments for those who do.

Any one of those proposals, and especially all of them together, would go a long way towards easing New Yorkers' fears about whom their legislature is really working for. An honest, trustworthy government is absolutely imperative to the functioning of our state. Constituents and taxpayers have lost faith in our legislative process, and their frustrations are not unfounded.

There is still time to make the right decision and ensure that the many scandals that have plagued our government become a thing of the past. But until we pass strict ethics reforms, I could not possibly support any kind of pay raise, and I believe New Yorkers feel the exact same way.

Sincerely,  
Ischia J. Bravo

CC:  
Hon. Barry A. Cozier (Ret.)  
Roman B. Hedges  
Mitra Hormozi  
Gary Johnson  
Hon. James L. Black (Ret.)  
Fran Reiter