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May 27th, 2009

Molinaro Pushes For Albany Ethics Reform

Assemblyman Marc Molinaro (R,C,I-Red Hook) today praised Governor David Paterson's efforts to overhaul the Commission on Public Integrity (CPI) as a sincere effort to restore accountability and oversight to New York's state government. Molinaro points out that the CPI was doomed to failure from its conception in 2007, because it was beholden to the governor who appointed 7 of its 13 members.



Assemblyman Marc Molinaro

"If we want to restore public confidence in government, we need to make sure that the fox isn't the only one watching the henhouse," said Molinaro. "The governor's proposal for a new commission to monitor the actions of the state Legislature as well as those of the governor's office is admirable. There must be open dialogue between lawmakers, good government groups and members of the public, so that the merits of these measures can be vetted and a consensus can be reached; one that will result in the best ethics oversight committee possible."

The governor's proposal includes the creation of a single commission, called Government Ethics Commission (GEC), consisting of 5 members each appointed by a special panel. The GEC would report directly to the state's Inspector General and would have the authority to enforce laws regarding lobbying, campaign finance, open meetings and gifts to officials. The new commission will have the power to issue subpoenas, impose fines and refer criminal matters to prosecutors. The GEC would absorb all responsibilities currently held by two separate commissions, the CPI and the Legislative Ethics Commission (LEC). Molinaro points out that while this idea is sound the logistics still need to be hammered out.

"It is clear that we cannot continue to operate with the current commissions so immersed in political biases. Furthermore, it is nonsensical to have a separate commission just to monitor the Legislature, especially since that commission's members are selected by legislative leaders themselves," said Molinaro. "The people of this state expect their elected representatives to be held to the highest ethical standards and we need to ensure that if these individuals fail in this regard there is a mechanism in place that will deliver appropriate justice."

Molinaro voiced the same concerns the Governor's proposals seek to address regarding the CPI in 2007 when he served as Ranking Member on the Assembly Government Operations Committee.

5 Stars - Excellent

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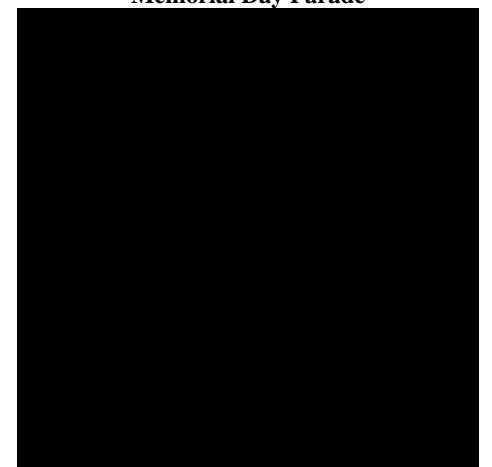
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