



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1279-2005, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1279

Resolution calling upon the legislature of the State of New York to amend Section 811 of the New York State General Municipal Law to authorize the Conflicts of Interest Board to modify the scope of the New York City financial disclosure form.

By Council Members Brewer, Gioia, Comrie, Gerson, James, Seabrook, Stewart and Jackson

Whereas, Public service is a public trust and a strong ethics program promotes both the reality and the perception of integrity in City government by seeking to prevent conflicts of interest before they occur; and

Whereas, The effectiveness of ethics laws rests largely upon the efficacy of the agency enforcing them; and

Whereas, The City of New York enacted conflicts of interest provisions almost 200 years ago, established an ethics board in 1959, and in 1989 significantly increased that board's responsibilities, renaming it the Conflicts of Interest Board; and

Whereas, New York City is the largest city in the state, with over 300,000 public servants subject to its conflicts of interest law and with a budget greater than that of all but a handful of governments in the country; and

Whereas, New York City requires an independent conflicts of interest board with the power and resources to administer, investigate, and enforce the New York City conflicts of interest law and the related financial disclosure law; and

Whereas, New York State mandates that the City of New York have a financial disclosure form for approximately 8,000 of its public servants that is at least as stringent in scope and substance as the state financial disclosure form; and

Whereas, That financial disclosure form bears little relation to the City's conflicts of interest law and thus reveals few conflicts of interest; and

Whereas, That form has proven to be too intrusive for many filers, particularly for members of boards and commissions, and has discouraged highly qualified persons from serving on such bodies; and

Whereas, The Board should therefore be authorized to modify the scope of the financial disclosure form for the City of New York, thereby permitting the Board to adopt a two-tiered system of disclosure similar to that in the federal government; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the Council of the City of New York calls upon the legislature of the State of New York to amend Section 811 of the New York State General Municipal Law to authorize the Conflicts of Interest Board to modify the scope of the New York City financial disclosure form.

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SML
November 30, 2005