

Media Contact:
BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE
AT THE NYU SCHOOL OF LAW
Suzanne Novak 212-992-8637

CITIZENS UNION
Dick Dadey 212-227-0342

COMMON CAUSE/NY
Rachel Leon 212 691-6421

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS/N.Y.S.
Barbara Bartoletti 518 469-8905

NEW YORK PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP
Blair Horner 518 436-0876

**CIVIC GROUPS URGE NEW GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATIVE LEADERS TO EMBRACE
ETHICS REFORMS IN RESPONSE TO “UNPRECEDENTED” NUMBER OF SCANDALS**
*2007 IS 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF ETHICS LAW, GROUPS URGE IT IS TIME FOR “RADICAL
OVERHAUL”*

Leading civic groups today urged Governor Eliot Spitzer and state legislative leaders to seize a “once-in-a-generation” opportunity and embrace a package of ethics reforms in the 2007 legislative session. The Brennan Center for Justice, Citizens Union, Common Cause, the League of Women Voters and NYPIRG released their “Top 10” list of reforms and urged action in 2007 – the 20th anniversary of the state’s ethics law.

The groups’ call came after series of controversies and scandals involving state lawmakers. In a letter to the governor and the legislative leaders, the groups wrote,


As you know, the last few years in Albany have been marked by a series of ethical lowlights. Three members of the Assembly, one Senator and one cabinet-level agency head have been convicted of political crimes. Two Assemblymembers and two Senators are currently under investigation. And the state Comptroller has been forced to resign.

>Lawmakers would normally respond to such controversies by holding hearings, drafting

legislation and advancing reforms. Yet in Albany, little significant change has occurred

The groups urged action on a package of reforms that would create an independent ethics watchdog to replace the current State Ethics Commission's and Legislative Ethics Committee's oversight of state law; ban "pay to play" activities, strengthen ethics guidelines and boost openness (click [here](#) for a summary of the proposals).

The groups urged noted that despite an "unprecedented" series of ethical controversies and scandals, little had been done in response. The groups called for action, "such reforms are long overdue and must be tackled early this session."

 Citizens Union of the City of New York, a non-partisan force for good government for more than 100 years, works to inform and engage New Yorkers, to ensure local and state government values its citizens, addresses critical issues, and operates in a fair, open, and fiscally sound manner.

299 Broadway, Suite 700, New York, NY 10007-1976

Peter J. W. Sherwin, Chair • Dick Dadey, Executive Director • info@citizensunion.org