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**BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE  
CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS - NEW YORK STATE  
NEW YORK PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP (NYPIRG)**

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**For Immediate Release  
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**GOOD GOVERNMENT GROUPS REACT  
TO ANNOUNCEMENT OF JCOPE INVESTIGATION**

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*New York good government groups comprised of Brennan Center for Justice, Citizens Union of the City of New York, League of Women Voters - New York State, and New York Public Interest Research Group, this afternoon released the following joint statement in response to the New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) announcement that they will be conducting a "substantial basis" investigation.*


With its public announcement today of a vote in favor of a "substantial basis investigation", JCOPE is likely beginning an important investigation of the state legislature. The announcement is a welcome step in the right direction—a full investigation will be a positive step towards the goal that our groups have long championed: effective independent ethics oversight of both the legislative and executive branches of New York state. JCOPE's ability to do so will be judged by its product, the results of the investigation.

We collectively reiterate the community's call last week that JCOPE must conduct a full and broad examination into the Assembly's handling of the Vito Lopez matter, and should not limit itself to Lopez in particular. Our groups will continue to closely monitor this investigation as it unfolds. We expect a thorough and robust investigation that follows the facts and concludes with documentation of how the matter was handled along with an explanation of conclusions, and the basis for any

recommendations and proposed sanctions, if any.

As we have seen in these past few weeks, JCOPE has been limited in transparency by the statute which created it. JCOPE's disclosure of the investigation is a small step forward in striking the right balance between accountability, the public's right to know, and protecting the rights of the alleged subjects. As the commission continues to wrestle with important questions of transparency, our groups will continue to monitor and review these same issues. We will develop recommendations as needed to balance protecting the integrity of the investigative process with public transparency and accountability.

JCOPE's ability to be an effective watchdog, and to restore the public's trust in Albany, requires it follow the evidence and facts wherever they lead.



[Citizens Union](#) is a nonpartisan good government group dedicated to making democracy work for all New Yorkers. Citizens Union serves as a civic watchdog, combating corruption and fighting for political reform. We work to ensure fair and open elections, honest and efficient government, and a civically-engaged public.

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