

**Citizens Union of the City of New York
Common Cause/NY
League of Women Voters/N.Y.S.
New York Public Interest Research Group**

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NEWS RELEASE

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REFORM COALITION OFFERS BLUEPRINT TO END SENATE STALEMATE

A coalition of long-time reform organizations today released the outline of their plan to end the Senate stalemate. Citizens Union, Common Cause/NY, the League of Women Voters, and NYPIRG issued their plea as the state Senate entered its fourth week of gridlock.

At this late date, it appears that efforts to develop a long-term solution have failed. Thus, the groups' plan urges a "moratorium" on the debate over leadership, a bipartisan agreement to wrap up session and approval of new rules. At least initially, the plan focuses on achieving action on the immediate needs facing the state. There is a host of "must do" legislation that demands action. From local taxes to New York City Mayoral control of schools, from allowing additional debt to overhauling the state's ethics laws, key items need action, now.

A short-term agreement must offer tangible benefits to each side.

- First, put aside the battle over who controls the Senate until an appropriate date in early July.
- Second, rotate on a daily basis the role of presiding officer – with strict limits on discretionary powers – between Republicans and Democrats.
- Third, create a Senate legislative coordinating committee with an equal number of Republicans and Democrats. These Senators would agree on the legislation that would move forward.
- Fourth, the Democrats and Republicans should to agree to the most important of the Senate Rules change proposals. In particular, there must be an agreement to essentially equalize resources for each of the Senators and to revitalize the committee process with these requirements locked in place through the end of 2010.

Finishing up the session would then give the Senate six months to discuss how best to move forward. It is our strongest hope that the success in wrapping up the session will begin to forge relationships among rank-and-file members that will be the foundation for a truly bipartisan Senate for the 2010 legislative session.