



June 7, 2022

VIA EMAIL

Kathy C. Hochul
Governor, State of New York

Carl Heastie
Speaker, New York State Assembly

Letitia James
Attorney General, State of New York

Robert Ort
Minority Leader, New York State Senate

Thomas P. DiNapoli
Comptroller, State of New York

William A. Barclay
Minority Leader, New York State
Assembly

Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Majority Leader, New York State Senate

Re: Principles for appointments to Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government (CELG)

Dear Statewide Elected Officials and Legislative Leaders:

We write knowing that the adopting legislation in the budget sets a short time frame for appointing members to the new Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government (“CELG”). We urge you, as you consider the statutory requirements of “background and expertise,” to abide by the following principles:

1. Appoint only independent and well-qualified people to be members of CELG. In making the appointments, evaluate potential members based on their prior experience, expertise, character and independence. Do not appoint persons who because of their current or previous positions or relationships might reasonably appear to lack independence.

Our groups previously [proposed prohibitions](#) barring ethics commission members from serving if they or their spouses, domestic partners and unemancipated children have for the last three years been (with regard to New York):

- a. lobbyists
- b. state vendors or contractors;
- c. major campaign contributors (those contributing \$15,000 or more in the aggregate in any year);
- d. party officials;

- e. state and local elected officials; and
 - f. state and legislative officers and employees.
2. Solicit and consider recommendations and applications from a wide array of groups and individuals.
3. Consult among yourselves to ensure that the members of CELG represent diverse geographical areas and racial, ethnic and gender groups, as well as professional backgrounds and expertise.
4. Commit in advance not to engage in direct or indirect *ex parte* communications with the appointees or with other members of CELG concerning any matter that is or is likely to be under consideration with the commission. In selecting appointees, obtain a similar commitment from potential appointees.
5. Commit to not have communications with the law school deans beyond the formal submission of nominations.

Thank you for your consideration of these principles.

Sincerely,

Betsy Gotbaum
Executive Director
Citizens Union

Evan Davis
Manager
Committee to Reform the State Constitution

Susan Lerner
Executive Director
Common Cause NY

Laura Ladd Bierman
Executive Director
League of Women Voters of New York State

Edward Murray
Chair
New York City Bar Association Committee on Government Ethics and State Affairs

Blair Horner
Executive Director
NYPIRG

John Kaehny
Executive Director
Reinvent Albany

Erica Vladimer
Co-Founder
Sexual Harassment Working Group

Cc: New York State Law School Deans