

Press Release

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



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Contact: BRIAN SAPP
Office: 631-854-9693
Cell: 631-987-3510

UNANIMOUS APPROVAL FOR LEGISLATOR LINDSAY III'S LAW TO STRENGTHEN LOBBYING REGULATIONS

(HOLBROOK-NY)- The Suffolk County Legislature unanimously passed Legislator Bill Lindsay III's resolution to strengthen lobbying regulations within the County at the May 12th General Meeting. Lindsay III's amendments will strengthen the definition of lobbying, increase transparency within the legislative process, and allow for a more centralized enforcement of lobbying regulations.

Since the inception of Lindsay III's proposed amendments last fall, the number of lobbyists that have registered with Suffolk County has increased from four to eleven, which still only represents a fraction of the people that are paid to try to influence the outcome of legislation or contracts. In New York State there are currently over 6000 registered lobbyists. The disparity between New York State and Suffolk County led to Lindsay III's idea that Suffolk County needed to do a better job at reporting and tracking lobbying activities and registering lobbyists.

"Clearly there was a problem with the implementation and enforcement of previous lobbying statutes," said Lindsay III. "Now we will have the resources to fully enforce the law in a way that will trigger more openness, fairness, and transparency."

A lobbyist will now be defined as every person or organization retained, employed or designated by any client to engage in lobbying before the County of Suffolk, its agencies, boards, commissions, the County Legislature and/or the County Executive. While lobbying will now be defined as any attempt to influence any determination made by the County Legislature or any member thereof with respect to the introduction, passage, or defeat of any

local legislation; any determination made by the County Executive to support, oppose, approve or disapprove any local legislation; the adoption, issuance or modification of any executive order by the County Executive; the adoption or rejection by a County agency of any rule or regulation having the force and effect of law; the outcome of any rate-making proceeding by a County agency; any determination made by a department, officer or employee of the County with respect to the procurement of goods, services or public works; or the award by a department, officer or employee of the County of any grant, loan, or agreement which involves the disbursement of public monies.

“Our residents deserve to know who their elected officials are meeting with behind closed doors,” said Lindsay III. “By strengthening lobbying regulations in Suffolk County we will increase government transparency and fairness while providing our residents with a better understanding of who is trying to influence legislation.”

In addition to amending the definition of lobbying, Lindsay III’s resolution makes the following changes to the County’s lobbying statute:

- Centralizes responsibility for administering the lobbyist law in the office of the Clerk of the County Legislature
- States expressly that the reports filed by lobbyists are not confidential and are subject to the New York Freedom of Information Law
- Empowers the Clerk of the Legislature to penalize lobbyists who fail to register or file reports required under this law.

Lindsay III’s resolution will take effect as early as the end of June, upon County Executive approval and filing with the Office of the Secretary of State

*Suffolk County Legislator Bill Lindsay III is the Chairman of the Economic Development Committee and Vice Chairman of the Government Operations, Personnel, Housing, and Consumer Protection Committee. Bill represents the 8th legislative district which consists of Bayport, Blue Point, Bohemia, Holbrook, Holtsville, Oakdale, Sayville, West Sayville and parts of North Patchogue.