
From the Office of Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz

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BYSIEWICZ PROPOSES ETHICS PLAN FOR TOWNS

Contributions to mayoral candidates would be posted on Internet

Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz is asking the Legislature to require municipalities to establish local ethics commissions and to require the posting of campaign contributors to mayor and first selectman candidates on her agency's website.

"In the post-Rowland, Ganim, Giordano era, the public demands and deserves full disclosure and scrutiny of politics at both the state and local level," Bysiewicz said. "Public confidence in government and the electoral process must be a real priority for all elected officials."

There are currently about 50 towns that maintain local ethics commissions and Bysiewicz believes it is time for all municipalities to adopt an ethics code for their elected officials. A model ethics code for towns to use was drafted by the State Ethics Commission in 1994, but has yet to receive legislative approval.

"The public trust must always be an ongoing priority for all of us in public service," said State Representative Chris Caruso (D-Bridgeport), House Chair of the Legislature's Government Administration & Elections Committee. "Public trust is earned through ethics and accountability at both the state and municipal levels."

The new website disclosure provision would affect approximately 130 towns that elect mayors and first selectman independently from their legislative body. Campaign reports for candidates for state office are already posted on the Secretary of the State's website.

"These are positions and constructive proposals that should be given full consideration when the municipal ethics bills are debated," said State Senator Donald DeFronzo, co-chair of the Legislature's Government Administration & Elections Committee.

In order to better mirror state ethics and campaign disclosure laws, Bysiewicz' plan also calls for all contributions over \$100 to candidates for mayor and first selectman from municipal contractors to be specifically noted. That threshold is currently \$400.

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Municipal Ethics proposal:

- Mayor/First Selectman campaign finance reports to be posted on Secretary of the State's website.
- Establishment of local ethics commissions.
 - State Ethics Commission to review and update 1994 model ethics code for municipalities.
 - Towns to adopt ethics code and establish local ethics commission.
- Campaign donations over \$100 from a municipal contractor to candidates for mayor and first selectman must be noted.