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- NEWS RELEASE -

## **BYSIEWICZ AND BLUMENTHAL CALL FOR IMMEDIATE AND SWEEPING ETHICS REFORM**

### CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS SAY OVERHAUL SHOULD INCLUDE ALL BRANCHES AND ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

**HARTFORD:** Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz and Attorney General Richard Blumenthal held a news conference on Thursday December 13<sup>th</sup> to announce their plans to overhaul Connecticut's ethics code for elected and public officials in all branches and levels of state government.

The joint proposal focuses on 5 areas of reform. Their proposal calls for:

- **Pension Revocation.** This law would revoke pension benefits of any state elected official or top appointee convicted of a crime related to their employment. This would include embezzlement, bribery, and fraud. Such a penalty would serve as a powerful deterrent to the people in power.
- **Municipal Code of Ethics.** This proposal will require all municipalities to either establish a code of ethics for municipal elected officials or adopt a model code of municipal ethics promulgated by the Office of State Ethics.

- **False Claims Act.** Penalize contractors who defraud the state and municipalities by filing false claims and work orders. Contractors who are found guilty of defrauding the state could be fined and removed from the pool of state contractors.
- **Judicial Reform.** This law would prevent the judicial branch from sealing court cases involving prominent businessmen, politicians, and judges from the public.
- **Permanent Legislative Committee on Ethics.** In addition to the Office of State Ethics, create a permanent bipartisan committee to hold accountable fellow members of the state legislature. The committee would have the power to investigate the conduct of members of the legislature, issue subpoenas, and recommend reprimand, censure or expulsion to the legislature.

“There is a crisis of confidence in our state and we must take action to restore the public's trust in our elected officials and government,” said Bysiewicz. “It's time to stop talking and to start taking action to enact sweeping and comprehensive reform in all levels and every branch of government. I call on the Governor and the legislature to make these reforms a priority in the next session.”

Blumenthal said, “We have no excuse – none – for permitting corrupt public officials to betray our trust and pick our pockets, and then receive their full pension at our expense after criminal convictions. We must act now – right now – to also enact a False Claims Act to stop corrupt contractors from collecting taxpayer money. If pension revocation and false claims laws had been adopted four years ago, when I first proposed them, we could be proactively blocking pension payments and deterring contracting misconduct that now continues. Only strong reform now will protect public trust and taxpayer money.

Blumenthal added, “This program is a comprehensive cure for the corruption cancer. It is not about a single unethical individual or incident, but about reforming the system as a whole.”