



NEW YORK STATE BALLOT MEASURE



Pensions for Convicted Officials

In 2011 the state passed a law allowing judges to reduce or revoke the state pension of a public officer convicted of a felony related to his or her duties. But, an amendment to the constitution is required for this law to apply to public officials who entered the pension system before 2011.

In 2015, Sheldon Silver (Democrat District 65), Speaker of the New York State Assembly, was sentenced to 12 years in prison. He was allowed to receive an annual pension of \$79,224. In 2015, Dean Skelos (Republican District 9), Senate Majority Leader, was sentenced to 5 years in prison. His annual pension was \$95,832.

A Yes Vote:

Allows a judge to take away or reduce the state pensions of public officials convicted of corruption.

If approved by the voters the measure would apply to lawmakers, top municipal and state officials, gubernatorial appointees and agency heads.

A No Vote:

Does not allow a judge to take away or reduce the state pensions of public officials convicted of corruption.

Vote Yes Arguments:

- Representative David Buchwald (Democrat District 93) said, "This constitutional amendment is designed to discourage public officials from taking part in unscrupulous practices that hurt New Yorkers and tarnish the reputation of our state government."
- Senate Majority Leader John J. Flanagan (Republican District 2) stated, "There must be zero tolerance for public corruption, and these ethics reforms are crucial to holding officials accountable and making sure they don't profit from abusing their positions."

Vote No Arguments:

- Senator Diane Savino (Democrat District 23) said that pensions are personal property and revoking them for bad behavior would set a troubling precedent. She added, "I think we go down a very bad road when we send a message that pensions can be taken away for behavior."
- Senator Ruben Diaz (Democrat District 32), stated, "This is wrong. This is wrong. This is wrong. If I do something, then, yes, I go to jail. But then my wife is out on the street? Just to please the media?"