

The Honorable Carl Heastie  
Member, New York State Assembly

The Honorable Joseph Morelle  
Member, New York State Assembly

The Honorable Joseph Lentol  
Member, New York State Assembly

The Honorable Catherine Nolan  
Member, New York State Assembly

January 29, 2015

Dear Assemblymembers,

Since you are a member of the Assembly who has declared as a contender for the position of Speaker, we write to ask that you commit to the Assembly holding an open and public process for its selection of the next Speaker, as outlined by our groups in correspondence to the Assembly on Tuesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>. This process should take place prior to the Assembly's vote to select a new speaker. **We specifically ask you to confirm your commitment to such an open public process to our groups by 10 a.m. on Friday, January 30<sup>th</sup>.**

We recommend that the Assembly create a defined, open and transparent process for selection of the next Speaker. Specifically, we recommend the Assembly require candidates to publicly confirm their candidacy for the position, and that the Assembly hold an open hearing for candidates to speak publicly about their qualifications and vision for the job. This event should be open to members of the public and be available by webcast on the Assembly web page, with sufficient public notification, as it will also help to focus the public's attention on the importance of the role of the office in state government. This public process is not intended to replace discussions taking place in conference, but rather to be a singular event that ensures that there is transparency regarding the candidates and how they would run the Assembly as Speaker.

Our organizations strongly believe that democracy demands openness. Backroom dealing and secrecy undermine public confidence and breed public cynicism and apathy. Public confidence in the Legislature is a cornerstone of public support for lawmaking, and public distrust of the legislative process erodes democracy. Setting a more open process and offering a public forum for candidates for Speaker is important in helping to build public trust in the Assembly, an especially important public interest given the circumstances under which the Speaker vacancy has arisen and the situation in which the Assembly currently finds itself.

**Again, to confirm your commitment to an open and public process, please contact any of the signers below by 10 a.m. on Friday, January 30<sup>th</sup>.**

Sincerely,

Lawrence Norden, Deputy Director,  
Democracy Program  
Brennan Center for Justice  
646-463-1579

Dick Dadey, Executive Director  
Citizens Union  
917-709-2896

Susan Lerner, Executive Director  
Common Cause New York  
917-670-5670

Blair Horner, Legislative Director  
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John Kaehny, Executive Director  
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