

**THE NEW YORK STATE
LEGISLATIVE PROCESS:
AN EVALUATION
AND BLUEPRINT FOR REFORM**

JEREMY M. CREELAN & LAURA M. MOULTON

**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**

**BRENNAN CENTER
FOR JUSTICE
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Six years of experience have taught me that in every case the reason for the failures of good legislation in the public interest and the passage of ineffective and abortive legislation can be traced directly to the rules.

New York State Senator
George F. Thompson
Thompson Asks Aid for Senate Reform
New York Times, Dec. 23, 1918

Some day a legislative leadership with a sense of humor will push through both houses resolutions calling for the abolition of their own legislative bodies and the speedy execution of the members. If read in the usual mumbling tone by the clerk and voted on in the usual uninquiring manner, the resolution will be adopted unanimously.

Warren Moscow
Politics in the Empire State
(Alfred A. Knopf 1948)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

■ INTRODUCTION

New York State’s legislative process is broken. This report documents five key weaknesses and compares New York’s process with those in other state legislatures and in the U.S. Congress. Together, the problems identified here deprive New Yorkers of the government they deserve. Indeed, New York’s legislative process limits legislators’ consideration of legislation – whether counted in hearings, debate, amendments, readings, conference committees, or even simply legislators’ presence when they vote – far more than any other legislature. Neither the U.S. Congress nor any other state legislature so systematically limits the roles played by rank-and-file legislators and members of the public in the legislative process.

Fortunately, many of the shortcomings of the current system can be remedied without new legislation or constitutional amendments. Mere changes in the rules of the Senate and Assembly would make a significant difference. For this reason, these reforms need not become the victim of the very legislative dysfunction they seek to repair.

This report identifies rules changes in five areas that together would make the New York State Legislature more representative, more deliberative, more accessible and accountable to the public, and more efficient. These proposed changes are organized here in the order of the legislative process itself – from a bill’s introduction and consideration by a committee, to its passage by the full Senate or Assembly, to the final reconciliation of the two chambers’ separate bills into a single bill for final passage.

Each chamber of the Legislature has complete control over whether or not to adopt these changes independent of each other and of the Governor. In January 2005, they will vote on the rules that govern their respective operations. Members of the Senate and Assembly who care about meaningful democracy in New York should seize that opportunity to adopt the changes recommended here. New York State’s voters should urge their representatives in Albany to reform the system now.

PROBLEM # 1

■ DYSFUNCTIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES

In most modern legislatures, committees “are the locus of most legislative activity.”¹ Committees have two principal functions: first, to enable legislators to develop, examine, solicit public and expert feedback upon, and improve bills in a specific area of expertise and to convey the results of their work to the full chamber; and second, to oversee certain administrative agencies to ensure that they fulfill their statutory mandates. New York’s committee system generally does not serve either of these functions:

Few Committee Hearings. Only 0.5% of the major bills passed by the Assembly and 0.7% of the major bills passed by the Senate from 1997 through 2001 were the subject of a hearing devoted to their consideration.²

Few Committee Reports. Only 1.1% of the major bills passed by the Assembly and 0% of the major bills passed by the Senate from 1997 through 2001 were the subject of committee reports.

Proxy Voting. Senate rules permit committee members to cast their votes by proxy. Only five other legislative chambers (out of 99) – including only one other chamber comparable to New York’s “professional” legislature, the Pennsylvania Senate – allow proxy voting in committee.³

Central Control of Committee Staff. In New York, the Assembly Speaker and the Senate Majority Leader hire – and have the power to fire – committee staff. New York’s two chambers are among only 32 (out of 99) that give any role at all to the legislative leadership or party caucuses. In fact, 26 state legislatures rely on a central, nonpartisan staff agency for their committee staff support. New York’s centralized control over staff discourages committee chairpersons from developing and promoting legislation without leadership support.

Too Many Committee Assignments. The New York State Senate has more standing committees (32) than all but one other state senate (Mississippi, at 35). The New York State Assembly is ranked fifth among houses with 37 standing committees. The proliferation of committees saddles lawmakers with an excessive number of committee assignments, and threatens the quality of committee work. It is only the overall inactivity of committees in New York that renders this problem less acute than it would otherwise be.

With such a weak committee system, the Legislature cannot develop legislation that fully reflects collaborative policy expertise, improve it through public hearings and reports, or provide the legislators and members of the public with opportunities to address and debate the strengths and weaknesses of a proposed bill.

■ ■ PROPOSED RULES CHANGES:

- Each committee shall have the authority and funding to hire and fire its own professional staff.
- If one fourth or more of the members of a committee petition for a public hearing on a bill or an agency oversight hearing, such hearing shall take place, unless the petition is rejected by a majority vote of the committee.
- All bills reported to the legislative floor must be accompanied by a detailed public committee report.

- Attendance at committee meetings shall be mandatory, except upon good cause shown, and committee meetings shall be recorded and the record made publicly available.
- No member shall be assigned to more than three committees during a legislative session.
- All bills reported to the legislative calendar shall be reported by a standing committee with jurisdiction over the bill's subject matter rather than being reported only by the Committee on Rules.

PROBLEM # 2

■ BARRIERS TO CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATION BY THE FULL SENATE OR ASSEMBLY

Even when a bill has the support of a majority of legislators within a chamber, New York's Legislature makes it more difficult than any other legislature in the country to discharge a bill from a committee for the full chamber to consider. In addition, New York allows the Majority Leader and Speaker complete control over the legislative calendars to determine whether and when a bill that has been reported out of a committee will be considered by the full Senate or Assembly, respectively.

Restrictions on Discharge Motions. Discharge motions are intended to allow supporters of a bill to obtain consideration by the full chamber despite the opposition or inaction of the committee to which the bill was referred or its chair. New York's Legislature places more restrictions than any other state legislature on motions to discharge a bill from a committee to the floor for a vote.

"Starring" in the Senate. The Senate Majority Leader can suspend action on bills listed on the Senate calendar by requesting that a "star" be placed beside its listing, and no action can be taken until one day after the star is removed. Only the Majority Leader can remove his own star. New York State's Senate is the only legislative chamber in the country that grants such unilateral authority over legislation to its leader.

Leadership Control over Legislative Calendar. The New York Senate and Assembly are two of only three chambers (out of 99) in which the leader of the chamber determines the order of bills placed on the second reading and special orders calendars; and two of only five chambers in which the leader determines the order of bills placed on the third reading calendar.

De Facto Veto Power of Speaker and Majority Leader. From 1997 through 2001, the Senate voted on 7,109 bills and, from 1997 through 1999, the Assembly voted on 4,365 bills. Not a single bill that reached the floor for a vote was rejected in either chamber. In other words, the Speaker and the

LEADERS' CONTROL OVER THE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR:

PREVENTING A MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

New York at one time led the nation in rewarding work with a decent minimum wage. Majorities in both the Assembly and Senate favor a wage hike. On March 1, 2004, the Assembly passed a bill (A.09710) that would increase the state minimum. In the Senate, thirteen Republican members joined the chair of the Labor Committee in sponsoring similar legislation (S.3291C), and a majority of that body has indicated its support. So why hasn't the minimum wage bill passed the Senate? The Senate Majority Leader's refusal to allow a floor vote, in combination with obstacles to the members' use of discharge motions, has, for now, prevented low-wage workers in New York from getting a raise.

RESTRICTIONS ON DISCHARGE MOTIONS:

WASTING TAXPAYERS' MONEY

In 1913, New York adopted a law requiring school districts and local governments to hire separate contractors for heating, plumbing, and electrical projects. The so-called "Wicks law" – aimed at curbing corruption – made sense 91 years ago. Today, critics argue that the cost of the Wicks law to New York's taxpayers may be as high as \$400 million per year. Majorities in the Assembly and the Senate support legislation that would partially repeal the Wicks law to allow local governments and school districts to save taxpayers' money. Yet, even in this time of state budget shortfalls, the legislation remains bottled up in committee.

RULES COMMITTEE ROADBLOCKS:
**BLOCKING TREATMENT
 FOR THE MENTALLY ILL**

It is difficult to imagine a bill that, on the merits, would be expected to pass more quickly than “Timothy’s Law” (S.5329/A.8301). The legislation’s namesake was a 12-year-old boy who committed suicide. Timothy’s death might have been prevented by psychological treatment that was not covered by his insurance and, consequently, was denied to him. The legislation would require New York’s health insurers to cover treatment for mental illness and drug abuse. The Assembly has passed Timothy’s Law, and 33 of 61 senators have sponsored the legislation in their chamber. Why hasn’t Timothy’s Law become law? In 2003, the Senate Rules Committee (chaired by the Majority Leader) refused to report the bill to the full Senate for a vote.

Majority Leader are able to prevent any bill from reaching the floors of their respective chambers without the certainty of passage and, presumably, without their support.

Together, these barriers prevent legislators – and their constituents – from obtaining votes on much-needed legislation by the full Senate or Assembly. They also exacerbate the limits placed on members of the minority political party in each chamber – the Democrats in the Senate and Republicans in the Assembly at present – who seek to represent their constituents and their interests through legislative action.

■ **PROPOSED RULES CHANGES:**

- If three or more members of a committee petition for a vote on a bill, the chair shall schedule such vote as soon as practicable in the current legislative session and in any event no later than ten days before the end of the session.
- New York’s limits on discharge motions should be relaxed as follows:
 - ◆ Any elected member of the chamber shall be allowed to make a motion to discharge a bill from a committee, and the sponsor’s agreement shall not be required.
 - ◆ Motions to discharge shall be allowed at any time after 20 days has passed since the bill was referred to the committee and until five days before the end of the legislative session.
 - ◆ There shall be no limit on the number of motions to discharge within a legislative session.
 - ◆ Debate on a motion to discharge shall not be limited in duration, except that such debate shall be closed by a majority vote of the elected members of the chamber.
- Every bill that is voted out of committee shall be placed on the calendar and must be considered and voted upon by the full chamber within 60 days, or prior to adjournment, whichever comes first.
- All votes on discharge motions shall be taken by slow roll call and the votes of each member recorded as a public record.

PROBLEM # 3

■ **NO DEBATE, NO AMENDMENTS, INADEQUATE REVIEW**

In most legislatures, the procedural rules and practices encourage and even require legislators to read, consider, debate, and amend bills before voting on them in person. By contrast, New York’s Legislature discourages and even precludes such deliberative activities by legislators:

No Debate. From 1997 through 2001, 95.5% of the major legislation in the Assembly and 95.1% in the Senate were passed without any debate.

No Amendments. Not a single one of the 308 major bills analyzed from 1997 through 2001 was amended by the full chamber on the floor of either the Senate or the Assembly. Moreover, none of the amendments made to those major bills off the floor were debated on the floor of either chamber.

Closed Door Party Conferences. The four legislative party conferences in the Legislature – the Democratic and Republican Parties have one in each chamber – meet behind closed doors without any transcript or public record of their discussions, even on pending legislation. Such confidential meetings are arguably necessary on occasion. But the absence of legislative debate on the Senate and Assembly floors renders the complete secrecy of these conferences a significant obstacle to public information about the Legislature’s handling of legislation.

Empty Seat Voting. Both the Senate and the Assembly routinely employ a fast roll call procedure that facilitates what critics have called “empty seat voting,” in which members who have signed in for the day but are absent from the chamber, as well as members who are present but fail to indicate a negative vote by raising their hand to notify the clerk, are counted automatically as affirmative votes. In other words, at no time does a legislator have to consider how to vote – or even be physically present – in order to vote on legislation.

Empty seat voting is the rule rather than the exception in the Assembly according to available sources, although the Assembly does not record for the public the procedure used to pass a bill. In the Senate, out of 308 major bills passed from 1997 through 2001, the Senate used a fast roll call procedure on all but two occasions.

Among the nation’s “professional” legislatures, New York’s is reportedly the only legislature that routinely allows empty seat voting. Only 18 chambers of 94 surveyed use an empty-seat voting procedure or an equivalent procedure at any time, and at least 12 of those 18 reportedly use such a procedure only rarely. By contrast, it was reported that the other 76 of 94 chambers (81%) require attendance to cast a vote and adhere faithfully to that policy in practice.

Unnecessary “Messages of Necessity.” The New York State Constitution requires that legislators have the opportunity to read and consider a bill for at least three days before voting on its final passage.⁴ If, however, the Governor certifies in a “message of necessity” requested by the Speaker or Majority Leader that a bill must be voted on immediately, those leaders can pass the bill without allowing the legislators themselves or the public any meaningful opportunity to review it. Far from being reserved for emergencies, the Speaker and Majority Leader use the “message of necessity”

MIDNIGHT PASSAGE
WITHOUT DEBATE:

**\$1.8 BILLION FOR
AN ENDORSEMENT**

Few would argue that health care workers did not deserve a raise in 2002. But whether the legislation to provide those raises should have been debated and reviewed before passage is another story. The Health Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention Act of 2002 provided \$1.8 billion in raises for health care workers in SEIU Local 1199. The law was passed after closed-door negotiations among the Governor, Speaker, and Majority Leader. There was no debate, and there were no hearings. The Insurance and Health Committees never saw or voted on the bill. The legislation was passed in the middle of the night, using a message of necessity, without any chance for legislators even to read it. It was widely reported that in exchange for the law’s enactment, then-candidate Governor Pataki received the endorsement of SEIU Local 1199 president Dennis Rivera. Speaker Sheldon Silver’s campaign committee received \$281,200 from SEIU Local 1199 and its affiliated hospital association. Majority Leader Bruno’s campaign committee received \$230,350. The lesson? When the people’s representatives are left out of the legislative process, the people lose their voice. When the committees of the legislature are bypassed, fundamental public policy concerns, such as the state’s \$5 billion budget deficit at the time of this deal, are ignored. And when important laws are enacted without debate or hearings, political deal-making rules the day.

FEW CONFERENCE COMMITTEES: TOXIC BROWNFIELDS

In a properly functioning legislature, conference committees are routinely convened to reconcile differences between bills passed by the two legislative chambers. When they are bypassed, which is business as usual in Albany, the damage can be serious. For over a decade, legislation to clean up more than 800 contaminated industrial sites across the state known as “brownfields” remained stalled in the legislature despite widespread support, ongoing toxic hazards and economic stagnation in communities. With no conference committee system, differences between the Senate’s and Assembly’s separate bills went unresolved. Finally, in June 2003, the Governor, Speaker, and Majority Leader reached agreement behind closed doors and then rushed final passage of the law through the Assembly and Senate without meaningful opportunities for debate or even review. Acting in extreme haste without adequate review, the Senate passed the wrong version of the bill. The legislative session came to an end, and the people of New York still were without a brownfields law. Three months later, the Senate convened for a special one-day session to correct its mistake. The cost to New Yorkers? Harmful delay in resolving and passing legislation that protects communities from environmental threats and economic stagnation.

frequently to bypass the State’s constitutional aging requirement. From 1997 through 2001, a message of necessity was requested and obtained for at least one chamber’s vote on 26.9% of the major legislation that was passed.

Inadequate Review. For the 308 major laws passed from 1997 through 2001, the median number of days between a bill’s introduction and its passage was 10 in the Assembly and 35 in the Senate. In the Assembly, 124 out of the 308 laws (*i.e.*, 40.3%) were passed within five days or fewer of their introduction. In the Senate, 85 laws (*i.e.*, 27.6%) passed within five days or fewer. Notably, in both 1997 and 2000, the Assembly spent a median of just two days on major legislation between introduction and final passage.

Together, these practices prevent New Yorkers’ elected representatives from fully reviewing, considering, debating, and amending legislation before it becomes law. As a result, legislators cannot fully represent their constituents’ interests and are forced to allow flawed legislation to be passed.

■ PROPOSED RULES CHANGES:

- Votes by members shall be recorded and counted only when the member is physically present in the chamber at the time of the vote and personally indicates whether s/he wishes to vote “aye” or “nay.” Such votes shall be made available as a public record.
- No messages of necessity shall be approved by the Governor unless (a) at least two thirds of the elected members of the chamber in question have voted to request such message and (b) the Governor has personally reviewed and signed such message as intended by the Constitution.
- Debate on a bill shall not be limited to less than five hours and shall be so limited only by a majority vote of the elected members of the chamber.
- When considering bills, legislative party conferences shall be convened and remain in open session unless closed with respect to a specific bill by a vote of four fifths of the elected members of the conference.

PROBLEM # 4

■ FEW CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

Conference committees are widely used in the U.S. Congress and in other state legislatures to reconcile differences between the bills passed by the two houses of a legislature to produce a single law that can be passed by both. In New York, however, conference committees have been used only rarely since the first decades of the 20th century. Instead, to pass a bill into law one chamber must move to substitute the other chamber’s version of the bill for its own, with the leaders of the two chambers working out any differences directly.

As a result, New York does not have any established mechanism to prevent legislative gridlock if the Speaker and Majority Leader cannot resolve their differences directly in closed-door negotiations. The result, in too many cases, is a failure to pass even legislation that has garnered overwhelming support among legislators and the public. In addition, New York does not obtain the benefits of a conference committee's review and airing for public scrutiny of the final version of a bill before it is voted into law.

■ PROPOSED RULES CHANGE:

- When bills addressing the same subject have been passed by both chambers, a conference committee shall be convened at the request of the prime sponsor from each chamber or the Speaker and Majority Leader. Such committee shall convene for a "mark up" session within two weeks of such a request to reconcile the differences in the two chambers' bills before final passage. These sessions shall be open to the public and shall be transcribed.

PROBLEM # 5

■ LEGISLATIVE INEFFICIENCY AND HIGH COSTS

New York legislators introduce more bills than in any other state yet enact a lower percentage of bills into law than all but two other legislatures. New York's legislators also spend more on the Legislature's own operations than most if not all legislatures, yet as this report documents most members play a limited role in the legislative process. Together, these facts suggest that substantial member resources are inefficiently devoted not to the relatively few bills that pass the Legislature but to the mountain of bills that will never even reach a committee vote much less become law:

Most Bills Introduced. In 2002, 16,892 bills were introduced in New York, more than any other state, followed by Illinois at 8,717 and Massachusetts at 7,924.

Second Lowest Percentage of Bills Enacted. New York's rate of enactment – *i.e.*, the percentage of bills introduced that is enacted into law – is consistently one of the lowest in the nation. In 2002, New York's enactment rate was 4.1%, higher than only two other states (New Jersey and North Carolina, both 2.7%), while the national average was 28%. This is true despite the fact that New York State was sixth among states in the sheer number of bills signed into law in 2002 (693 bills).

High Costs of New York State's Legislature. New York's Legislature spends more than most, if not all, state legislatures on its staff and operations. In 2001, for example, New York appropriated more funds for its legislature's operations than all but two other states in the country. At least as recently as 1996, moreover, New York's Legislature had "by far the largest payroll,

LEGISLATIVE DELAY:

LIMITING GLBT RIGHTS

Those who think of New York as a progressive champion of human rights may be surprised to learn that the law forbidding discrimination based on sexual orientation took more than three decades to be enacted. The Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Act ("SONDA") was first introduced in Albany in 1971 and was passed by the Assembly every year since 1993. The bill barred discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, public accommodations, housing, education, and credit. In 2002, the Senate Majority Leader allowed SONDA to be voted on by the full Senate for the first time, where it passed on its first vote. The trigger for this breakthrough was reportedly the Governor's pursuit of the endorsement of a leading gay rights organization in New York State during his re-election campaign. But for this political calculation, SONDA might still be awaiting its first Senate vote, at a continued cost to the rights of millions of New Yorkers.

with 3,899 staffers,” of any state legislature in the country.⁵

Member Funding Used to Punish Disloyalty. Because the Speaker and Majority Leader can control each member’s funding for staff and office operations, members are discouraged from challenging their leader’s approach to specific legislation or to procedural rules. This reality prevents members from advocating for any changes to the procedural rules that could lessen the authority of the chambers’ leader, regardless of the merits of such changes.

■ PROPOSED RULES CHANGES:

- Each member shall be limited to introducing 20 bills in the Assembly and 30 bills in the Senate in each session.⁶
- No member shall be assigned to more than three committees during a legislative session.
- All members shall receive equal funding for the operating costs and staff of their individual offices, regardless of the member’s party affiliation or seniority.

¹ ABNER J. MIKVA & ERIC LANE, *LEGISLATIVE PROCESS* 207 (2d ed. 2002).

² Every year, the editors of *McKinney’s Session Law News of New York* identify and publish a list of those laws enacted in the prior year and determined to be “major legislation.” For the purposes of this study, we have analyzed the “major legislation” passed from 1997 through 2001. See *McKINNEY’S SESSION LAW NEWS OF NEW YORK* (1997-2001). Although 310 laws were identified by McKinney’s, two of those laws (S70001 and S70002) were not listed in the Legislative Digest for the years in question. Accordingly, we did not include those two laws in our analysis of major legislation.

³ Professional legislatures (California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin) are defined through an index of legislative professionalism presented in SARAH McCALLY MOREHOUSE & MALCOLM E. JEWELL, *STATE POLITICS, PARTIES, AND POLICY* 212-13 (2d ed. 2003). The use of this cohort as a benchmark against which to assess the New York State Legislature was suggested to us by Gerald Benjamin, *Reform in New York: The Budget, the Legislature, and the Governance Process* (Background Document Prepared for a Citizens Budget Commission Conference, “Fixing New York State’s Fiscal Practices, Nov. 13-14, 2003), at <http://cbcny.org/>. See also Keith F. Hamm & Gary F. Moncreif, *Legislative Politics in the States*, in *POLITICS IN THE AMERICAN STATES* 157-58 (Virginia Gray & Russell L. Hanson eds., 8th ed. 2003).

⁴ N.Y. Const. Art. III, § 14

⁵ ROBERT WARD, *NEW YORK STATE GOVERNMENT: WHAT IT DOES, HOW IT WORKS* 108 (Rockefeller Institute Press 2002).

⁶ This limitation shall apply only to introductions as sole or prime sponsor, and shall not apply to: resolutions, floor amendments, or budget bills; emergency introductions at the request of the Governor; bills requested to be brought to the floor for “same as” bill consideration; departmental bills; or to “local bills” submitted through a member at the request of a county or municipal government.

METHODOLOGY

The research for this report included nine principal analyses, focusing primarily on the set of 308 laws passed from 1997 through 2001 that were considered “major legislation” by *McKinney’s Session Law News of New York*:

- **Committee Work.** To obtain information concerning committees’ handling of each of the “major” laws passed from 1997 through 2001, we examined committee voting records from the Assembly Public Information Office and the Senate Journal Clerk’s Office for all of the committees through which these bills passed. Where possible we supplemented committee voting records with interviews of both the legislative analysts from each of the relevant committees and staff members for the laws’ sponsors to determine whether public hearings had been held and whether committee reports had been issued on the bills in question.
- **Debates on the Floor.** Information on debate was collected from the floor transcripts and the summaries of activity on each of the 308 major bills passed from 1997 through 2001 maintained by the Senate Microfilm/Microfiche Office and the Assembly Public Information Office.
- **Messages of Necessity.** Information on messages of necessity for the 308 major bills passed from 1997 through 2001 was drawn from the Legislative Bill Drafting Commission, STATE OF NEW YORK LEGISLATIVE DIGEST (1997-2001).
- **Committee Votes.** To understand how standing committees choose to vote on bills referred to them, we examined the complete voting records of the Assembly’s Committee on Economic Development, Job Creation, Commerce and Industry for the years 1997-2001 obtained from the Assembly Public Information Office.
- **Historical Survey.** The authors conducted historical research on legislative procedures and practices from 1777 to the present, but focused on the period since 1900. Sources included proceedings of the constitutional conventions, contemporary press accounts, contemporary studies of the New York State legislature and commission reports, secondary historical works on New York history, and political science literature on legislative procedure.
- **Legislative Rules Analysis.** Using the most recent versions of state legislative rules available on-line, the authors analyzed their treatment of specific steps in the legislative process, including limitations on debate, discharge of bills from committee, committee hearings, voting, and Rules Committees. The rules of all 99 legislative chambers were analyzed.

- **Telephone Survey on Frequency of Debate and Voting Procedures.** Interviews were conducted by telephone with at least one source, where possible from a non-partisan research or library service associated with the legislature of each state, in order to determine the frequency of debate on the floor, roll calls, and attendance at votes on the floor. Through this survey, we obtained complete information concerning 94 of the 97 state legislative chambers outside New York.
- **Interviews with Legislators and Staff.** In addition to the interviews conducted in connection with the committee analysis discussed above, numerous sitting members of the Assembly and Senate and members of their staff were interviewed concerning various legislative procedures.
- **Vote Outcomes for All Bills 1997-2001.** The vote tallies shown in the Journal of the Senate of the State of New York and in the Journal of the Assembly of the State of New York for all bills on which the Senate and Assembly voted from 1997 through 2001 were analyzed to determine how often bills were rejected by either chamber.



BRENNAN CENTER

FOR JUSTICE

AT NYU SCHOOL OF LAW

161 Avenue of the Americas

12th Floor

New York, NY 10013

212-998-6730

www.brennancenter.org