

BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE
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COMMON CAUSE/NY
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS/N.Y.S.
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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release:
Monday, March 22, 2010

FOLLOW UP ANALYSIS: NEW YORK CITY RESIDENTS LOSE IN STATE'S "MEMBER-ITEM LOTTERY"

NYC: 49 ASSEMBLY DISTRICTS AND 11 SENATE DISTRICTS RECEIVE LESS THAN "FAIR SHARE"

NYS: 114 ASSEMBLY AND 43 SENATE DISTRICTS RECEIVE LESS THAN "FAIR SHARE"

REFORMERS URGE FAIRNESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF "GROTESQUELY UNFAIR" SYSTEM

The overwhelming majority of New Yorkers live in Senate or Assembly legislative districts that lose out in the state's member item system. In New York City alone, residents who live in 49 of the 64 Assembly districts that received member items, and in 11 of the 26 Senate districts, receive less than the "fair share" or average amount typically spent on member items. Additionally, 12 NYC Assembly members received more combined member item money in 2009 (\$11.764 million) than the remaining 52 NYC Assembly members received in total (\$11.325 million). Seven NYC Senators received more combined member item money in 2009 (\$27.74 million) than the remaining 19 NYC Senators received in total (\$25.86 million).

This analysis of city data is a follow-up to statewide data released earlier today by civic groups showing that New Yorkers who live in 114 of the 141 Assembly districts that received member items, and in 43 of the 62 Senate districts, receive less than the "fair share" or average amount of the \$170 million typically spent on member items. Sixty-nine percent of New Yorkers across the state live in a Senate district that received less than the "fair share." Eighty-one percent of the population statewide lives in an Assembly district that got less than its fair share.

The Brennan Center for Justice, Citizens Union of the State of New York, Common Cause/NY, the League of Women Voters/N.Y.S. and NYPIRG released the analysis and decried the current member item system and "grotesquely unfair" and "cries out for change."

The member item program is discretionary spending typically controlled by legislators, or groups of legislators. Usually the recipients of such spending are not-for-profit corporations involved in delivering services to members of local communities. Historically, member items have been a source of controversy and scandal due to spending misuse by legislators and recipient groups.

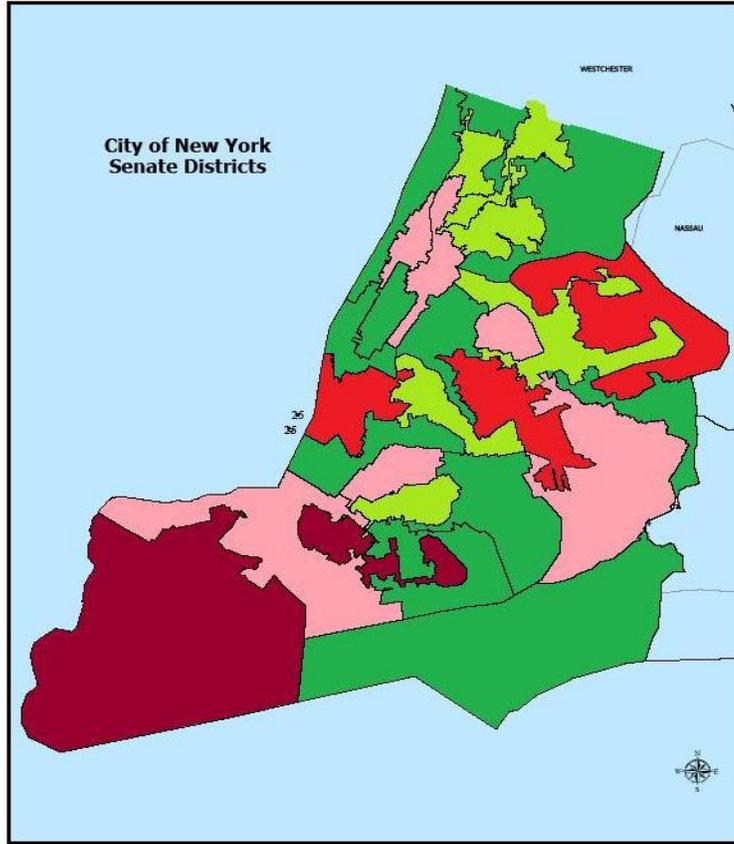
Member item spending is allocated based on the seniority, political power and political needs of legislators. The civic groups determined the "ideal" by dividing the amount of member item spending per house divided by the number of legislators who participated in the program. Under this analysis, each Senator "ideally" would have awarded \$1.2 million; each Member of the Assembly would have allocated \$300,000. Each Senate district contains roughly 300,000 constituents, each Assembly district 126,000.

The groups called on New York's state elected officials to approve reform legislation introduced by Senator Serrano and Assemblywoman Galef (S.7007/A.10116). The legislation would mandate that each legislator receive equal shares of member item spending; sets standards for entities wishing to receive member items; and requires strict oversight of member item spending by state agencies and the Attorney General.

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List of NYC Legislators

- More than two times average \$
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- More than average \$
- Less than average \$
- Less than half average \$
- Less than 1/4 average \$
- District received no member items.



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