

News Coverage on Term Limits

Silver scandal renews calls for term limits

[Yancey Roy](#) [1] [2] [2] [2] [2]

09/25/2012

<http://www.newsday.com/long-island/politics/silver-scandal-renews-calls-for-term...> [3]

ALBANY -- An upstate senator renewed his call Tuesday for term limits on state Senate and Assembly leaders, in the wake of a sexual harassment scandal that's entangled Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver.

At issue are sexual allegations against powerful Assemb. Vito Lopez (D-Brooklyn) and a secret settlement approved by Silver (D-Manhattan). The Assembly agreed to pay \$135,000 -- \$103,000 in public money -- to two former Lopez staffers and their attorneys to settle the case.

The episode is now the subject of a civil investigation by the state ethics commission and a criminal probe by a special prosecutor. Silver has acknowledged he mishandled the case by not sending the complaints to the Assembly Ethics Committee.

Sen. Joe Griffo (R-Rome) said the controversy shows the need for "term limits on the most powerful offices in Albany." Griffo and Assemb. Sandra Galef (D-Ossining) have sponsored a bill to keep anyone from serving as Senate or Assembly leader for more than 12 years.

The lack of term limits consolidates power and hinders government transparency, Griffo said. "I think what we have seen is that when the same people are in power for a long time, the process

does not function in the same, open way it should when there is change," he said in a statement.

Griffo and Galef have been advocating the initiative for several years, but it has never gained much traction.

The renewed push comes as Republican State chairman Ed Cox and others have called on Silver to step down. He's refused, calling the demands "election-year politics." Silver spokesman Michael Whyland declined to comment Tuesday.

The state Senate voluntarily imposed a rule in 2011 to limit a leader's term to eight years, noted Scott Reif, spokesman for Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos (R-Rockville Centre). Reif said regardless of whether the Griffo bill becomes law, the Senate would abide by its eight-year rule.

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo declined to get involved, saying, "I don't know how relevant my opinion is on how (the legislature) should be governed."

Source URL: <http://nyconstitution.org/press-clip/news-coverage/term-limits/newsday-silver-scandal-renews-calls-term-limits>

Links:

[1] [http://nyconstitution.org/press-clip-author/Yancey Roy](http://nyconstitution.org/press-clip-author/Yancey_Roy)

[2] <http://nyconstitution.org/press-clip-author>

[3] <http://www.newsday.com/long-island/politics/silver-scandal-renews-calls-for-term-limits-1.4039584?p=>