

Statement of Commission Chair Daniel J. Horwitz

April 30, 2013

My fellow Commissioners, good morning. Before we begin today's meeting I would like to take this time for a few words.

First and foremost, I again want to thank Governor Andrew Cuomo for the opportunity to serve as Chairman and I look forward to working with each of you to build on the foundation created under the leadership of District Attorney DiFiore. We all thank her for her service with the Commission and wish her well.

Remarkably, it was just a year ago we began filling the top staff positions to follow through on the Commission mandates pursuant to the Public Integrity Reform Act. In that short time, important work has been accomplished with a smaller staff and budget than many predecessor agencies.

The Commission has adopted guidelines and regulations enacting historic new disclosures for lobbyists; reviewed more than 300 potential investigative matters; processed more than 25,000 financial disclosure statements filed by public officials; managed, at any given time, more than 400,000 publicly-available disclosure filings; and finalized a significant number of ethics and lobbying enforcement actions.

The Commission also continues on a daily basis to provide guidance to public officials and lobbyists on the State ethics and lobbying laws.

This Commission's primary mandate is to help restore public trust in our State government. Recent events have illustrated that greed and corruption remain far too insidious. That said, the vast majority of state employees and officials take pride in

public service and seek to comply with the ethics laws. The Commission plays a critical role in ensuring that these employees have the training and tools to do so.

While investigations and enforcement of the public officers law and the lobbying act are an important part of our mission, it one piece of our larger purpose. Good government means that New Yorkers have confidence in their public officials. The core of JCOPE's mission is to ensure that through transparency, disclosures, training along with enforcement, New Yorkers can hold their public officials accountable .

To this end, the Commission is committed to promoting transparency wherever possible. Over the next weeks and months, we will be implementing a variety of initiatives along those lines. Shortly, New Yorkers will have easy access to our State officials' financial disclosure statements showing, for the first time, amounts they make from outside employment, how much they may owe others, and the values of their investments and holdings. We will also soon see new disclosures that pull the curtain back on certain consulting contracts State officials have with those doing business with our government.

Similarly, we have just begun to see disclosure of the financial forces behind those lobbying groups trying to influence policy decisions. It is a level of transparency unprecedented across the country. At the same time, the Commission will push forward with an emphasis on working with those involved in State government to better understand and comply with our ethics and lobbying laws. Training and guidance remain a top priority.

We will continue to build on our first year in managing the inherent tension between the need for transparency and the statutory requirements for confidentiality in certain

aspects of our work. We will also consider new approaches that will hopefully provide the public a better understanding of the work we do and the achievements we have made.

While a very young agency with unprecedented oversight, we have accomplished much and have much to do. I am honored to have the opportunity to serve as the commission's chair and look forward to our work to continue to build the public's confidence in our government.

Thank you.