

2645

2011-2012 Regular Sessions

I N S E N A T E

January 27, 2011

Introduced by Sens. GRISANTI, AVELLA, GRIFFO, MARTINS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Investigations and Government Operations

AN ACT to amend the public officers law, in relation to prohibiting the destruction of constituent case files by public officials

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "constitu-
2 ent casework protection act".
3 S 2. Section 80 of the public officers law, as amended by chapter 556
4 of the laws of 1925, is amended to read as follows:
5 S 80. Delivery of books and papers, money and property. 1. A public
6 officer shall demand from his OR HER predecessor in office or any person
7 in whose possession they may be, a delivery to such officer of all books
8 and papers, money and property belonging or appertaining to such office.
9 If such demand is refused, such officer may make complaint thereof to
10 any justice of the supreme court of the district, or to the county judge
11 of the county in which the person refusing resides. If such justice or
12 judge be satisfied that such books or papers, money and property are
13 withheld, he OR SHE shall grant an order directing the person refusing
14 to show cause before him OR HER at a time specified therein, why he OR
15 SHE should not deliver the same. At such time, or at any time to which
16 the matter may be adjourned, on proof of the due service of the order,
17 such justice or judge shall proceed to inquire into the circumstances.
18 If the person charged with withholding such books or papers, money and
19 property makes affidavit before such justice or judge that he OR SHE has
20 delivered to the officer all books and papers, money and property in his
21 OR HER custody which, within his OR HER knowledge, or to his OR HER
22 belief belong or appertain thereto, such proceedings before such justice
23 or judge shall cease, and such person be discharged. If the person
24 complained against shall not make such oath, and it appears that any

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[] is old law to be omitted.

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1 such books or papers, money and property are withheld by him OR HER,
2 such justice or judge shall commit him OR HER to the county jail until
3 he OR SHE delivers such books and papers, money and property, or is
4 otherwise discharged according to law. On such commitment, such justice
5 or judge, if required by the complainant, shall also issue his OR HER
6 warrant directed to any sheriff or constable, commanding him OR HER to
7 search, in the daytime, the places designated therein, for such books
8 and papers, money and property, and to bring them before such justice or
9 judge. If any such books and papers, money and property, are brought
10 before him OR HER by virtue of such warrant, he OR SHE shall determine
11 whether they appertain to such office, and if so shall cause them to be
12 delivered to the complainant.

13 2. A. NO PUBLIC OFFICER SHALL KNOWINGLY, WILLFULLY OR INTENTIONALLY
14 DESTROY CONSTITUENT CASE FILES, OR PERMIT ANOTHER PERSON TO DO SO. FOR
15 THE PURPOSES OF THIS SUBDIVISION, CONSTITUENT CASE FILES SHALL INCLUDE
16 ANY CORRESPONDENCE, WRITTEN OR ELECTRONIC, BETWEEN AN ELECTED OFFICIAL
17 AND A CONSTITUENT OR ANY CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN SAID ELECTED OFFICIAL
18 AND ANY OTHER PARTY PERTAINING TO: A CONSTITUENT'S GRIEVANCE; OR A QUES-
19 TION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR ANY BENEFIT; OR ANY ISSUE REGARDING A CONSTITU-
20 ENT REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE.

21 B. ANY PERSON WHO VIOLATES THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBDIVISION SHALL
22 BE GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR AND SHALL BE SUBJECT TO A FINE OF AT LEAST
23 TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS BUT NOT MORE THAN TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS, OR
24 TO A TERM OF IMPRISONMENT OF UP TO ONE YEAR, OR BOTH. THE PROVISIONS OF
25 THIS SUBDIVISION SHALL NOT APPLY TO: (A) ANY FILES WHICH ARE PROTECTED
26 BY ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE, OR (B) ANY DESTRUCTION OF FILES WHICH THE
27 CONSTITUENT CONSENTS TO IN WRITING, OR (C) CORRESPONDENCE FROM A
28 CONSTITUENT PRIMARILY ADVOCATING FOR OR AGAINST LEGISLATION, OR (D) ANY
29 FILES WHICH RELATE TO MATTERS WHICH HAVE BEEN RESOLVED.

30 S 3. This act shall take effect immediately.